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and

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By

John Edgar McFadyen

M.A. (Glas.), B.A. (Oxon.)

Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis in Knox College, Toronto

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TO THE

REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., LL.D.

My Teacher and Friend,

TO WHOSE TEACHING I OWE MORE THAN I CAN TELL IN WORDS,

AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP HAS BEEN TO ME AN INSPIRATION AND A JOY,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

WITH GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION.

Preface

To any one who cares at all for the church of Christ, the present theological situation must be one of unique interest; to many, indeed, it is one of grave apprehension. It is undeniable that there is a great critical movement within the church, almost within her every branch. What is to be the church's attitude towards that movement? Shall she welcome it, or fear it, or anathematize it? Ignore it she clearly cannot; for the problems are thrust upon her by her own sons, on the right hand and on the left.

The situation has its own element of pathos. The energies which might be devoted to positive, if not aggressive, religious enterprise, are largely consumed in the discussion of questions, which, while they are of infinitely more than academic interest, yet do not constitute the peculiar or essential work which it is the business of the church to do. But the questions cannot be suppressed. They suggest themselves necessarily to minds which participate, even in a small measure, in the intellectual culture of the age. And after all, though it is not by any means the chief task of the church to attempt an answer to those questions, it is, undoubtedly, one of her tasks; for the truth for which she stands will no longer powerfully command

the conscience, if it remains unrelated to contemporary thought, or if a suspicion arises that it can only be related by artifice.

The problems are urgent and difficult, and the answers to them divide the church. Between the representatives of the opposing views there has, for the most part, been a singular lack of that charity which one might reasonably have expected within the church. Seldom has either party been at the pains to understand the other. Both sides have suffered from ridicule and misrepresentation, with the result that the religious public, as a whole, is in a state of bewildered panic, and has very little real knowledge of the facts of the case. It is to aid the man who honestly desires a dispassionate presentation of what Old Testament criticism is and does, of how it works and what its bearings are upon vital elements in the Christian faith, that this volume has been written. To effect this end it has often been necessary to go somewhat into detail. It is easy, both for friends and foes, to make sweeping assertions as to the nature and effects of the critical method; but they carry little conviction, unless they are supported by facts. Far more important, for example, than to indulge in loose generalities about the nature of inspiration, is frankly to face the Biblical facts, and to let our theory — if we can frame any — be determined by them.

In order that the situation might be as fairly presented as possible, I have thought it advisable, in many cases, to let both the critics and their opponents speak for themselves. Whether, for example, a critic believes in the supernatural or not, will be best ascertained

from his own utterances. This principle accounts for the comparative frequency of quotation in certain parts of the discussion.

It is difficult to find a word to designate those who, in the main, support traditional opinion. It is invidious to call them traditionalists — even the term conservative is not always popular — and it is somewhat arrogant to assume that only the opponents of tradition work on scientific methods. Though I have usually spoken of the two parties as the critics and their opponents, I do not mean at all to imply that the opponents are devoid of critical acumen or scholarship. I simply use the words for convenience' sake, as their meaning is not likely to be mistaken.

My object in not infrequently referring to foreign writers was a threefold one: partly to enable those who are sufficiently interested to prosecute the study further for themselves; partly to show that the movement is a universal one, and that the situation in other countries is just as complex as in our own — Higher Criticism has roused just as much resentment in Germany, for example, as in Britain or America; and partly to show, through the medium of their own utterances, what precisely it is that the much-abused foreign critics have done and said. It has been too much the fashion to forget that there is a large variety of opinion within the critical ranks, and that epithets applicable to some scholars are totally inapplicable to others.

This volume has in view the man whose faith has been perplexed by current criticism, or by the rumors and representations of it. It tries to show him what

that criticism is, and how it not only in no way imperils his faith, but even helps him to bridge the gulf that too often yawns between faith and reason. I well remember the confusion and sorrow that, for a time, came into my own life, when the newer view of the Bible first began to make its appeal to me; and I write with the tenderest regard for all who feel as I then felt. The times of transition are hard. It would be a grief to me if any word of mine should wound the sensitiveness of any who love the Lord or the sacred Scriptures. It has been my earnest desire to help all who have been troubled. Of ridicule, abuse, and provocation there has already been more than enough. Not only by familiarizing myself with the literature which represents the opposition to the critical movement, but also by numerous discussions and conversations with laymen, students, and ministers, on both sides of the Atlantic, I have sought to understand sympathetically the spirit and methods of the opposition, to discover the secret of its almost vehement earnestness, and the interests which it believes to be imperilled by the advance of criticism. I have the profoundest sympathy for those who share the views from which this volume is, in part, an implicit dissent; for I know the pang of parting with them. But in parting with the things that can be shaken, one may be confirmed all the more in the things that abide.

I desire here to express my very earnest thanks to my friend the Rev. Professor W. G. Jordan, D.D., of Queen's University, Kingston, who, in spite of severe pressure of official duty, very carefully read all the proof-sheets through, and favored me with many

trenchant and valuable criticisms, of which I have gladly availed myself. I have also to thank Professor Kent, of Yale University, for help and encouragement.

JOHN E. McFADYEN.

Knox College, Toronto,
7th February, 1903.

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ERRATUM

On page 38, line 17, between "fragments" and "predicated" insert "of the documents."

Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church

Old Testament Criticism

AND

The Christian Church

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT DISTRESS

A DISTINGUISHED preacher, who has had long and ample opportunity for observation, and who has himself borne a conspicuous part in the conflict, expresses it as his deliberate conviction that there is being forced "upon the British Churches the gravest issue that any of them has had to face in living memory."[1] Few men who have been following even remotely the most recent developments of Biblical study would deny that those earnest words contain a large measure of truth. No doubt it is always hard, if indeed it is ever possible, to gauge with any accuracy the full meaning or magnitude of a contemporary situation: time alone can fully tell. But it does seem that the Church to-day, in all her branches, is face to face with a crisis of the most serious kind. Crises there have been as keen before, and there will be again; but never before have the problems awoke so public an interest or so universal a trepidation. What is conjectured or discovered in the study to-day is pub-

[1] Dr. John Smith, "The Integrity of Scripture," p. 279.

lished in the magazine to-morrow, and discussed by the newspaper on the third day. The general public know little of the results, and less of the processes; but they know enough — those who care at all for these things — to know that the attitude of scholarship to the Bible is not what it used to be, and they fear that the centre of gravity has shifted.

From every side comes painful corroboration of the strong words quoted above. Careful observers assure us that the breach between the Church and the educated classes, especially upon the continent of Europe,[1] is widening. Hundreds of men, we are told, have been made infidels by criticism. Ministers who have much to do with working men tell us that "the lowered views of Scripture and of its truthfulness, reliability, and Divine authority that have become prevalent, are undermining the faith of many, multiplying sceptics every day, and rendering appeals to Scripture as the word of the Lord less powerful and quickening than they were wont to be."[2] In one of the Synodical reports of the Presbyterian Church of

[1] Rev. J. J. Lias, in his "Principles of Biblical Criticism," p. 216, mentions the case of a speaker at Stuttgart, addressing the Evangelical League in 1887, and urging, among the deplorable results of criticism, that the laity were being estranged from the Church, that the belief was growing that the only advantage of Protestantism over Romanism was the freedom to believe nothing, and that thus a plausible excuse was afforded for taking no interest whatever in religion.

[2] McIntosh, "Is Christ infallible and the Bible true?" p. 457. Cf. Theodore Cuyler: "I am happy to say that in my early ministry the preachers of God's Word were not hamstrung by any doubt of the divine inspiration or infallibility of the Book that lay before them on their pulpits. The questions, 'Have we got any Bible?' and 'If any Bible, how much?' had not been hatched" (Recollections of a Long Life, pp. 78, 79; cf. 285–287).

Canada, "destructive criticism" is alleged as "breeding irreverence," and classified as one of "the influences which most strongly antagonize the advancement of true godliness." This sentiment would no doubt find an echo in many churches throughout many lands.

Nor is the unrest by any means confined to the laity, who might not be expected to have any special theological equipment. In every part of the theological world the strain is equally felt. It is notorious that divinity students, at any rate in the earlier stages of their course, are often perplexed by the teaching of their college: cases have occurred where they have been constrained by conscientious scruples to abandon the study of theology altogether. And the confusion and distress are occasionally shared by ministers, young and old alike, who are usually too busily engrossed by the practical duties of the pastor's life to follow with accuracy the often intricate processes of Biblical study. It is a well established fact that within recent years the number of candidates for the ministry in almost every church on both sides of the Atlantic has been declining, and criticism has been held to be at least partly responsible. In every church, there is probably a very large majority hostile to the newer movement, which is instinctively feared, even when it is not perfectly understood; for that movement is supposed to imperil all that is distinctive of the Christian faith. The Roman Catholic Church itself has not been untouched by it.[1] It feels the issues

[1] The reality of the critical movement within the Church of Rome has been practically attested by the series of commentaries projected by Père Lagrange, of which his own commentary on Judges is the first instalment.

to be serious, and a commission, representative of the Roman Catholic scholarship of many lands, has been appointed "to ascertain the limits of the freedom which is allowed to the Catholic exegete in the Biblical questions of the day; to point out definitely conclusions that must be maintained in the interests of orthodoxy, others that must be rejected as incompatible with, or dangerous to, divine faith; as well as the debatable ground between the two where each one is free to hold his own view." Even those who believe that religion has nothing to fear from criticism are yet compelled by the facts to admit that "criticism seems to make the Old Testament alike inaccessible and unintelligible to the pastors and their flocks." [1]

Within the last twenty years or so, both in America and Europe, churches have shown more or less emphatically their disapproval of the newer movement. The trial of Professor W. Robertson Smith has become a great historical landmark in the theological development of Scotland. In America, the cases of Professors C. H. Toy, H. P. Smith, and C. A. Briggs are familiar. The Church is fully awake to the importance of the issue, and it is felt that that issue is by no means an academic one: it touches the most profound and sacred interests of men. The rapid success of such a book as "Is Christ infallible and the Bible true?" the widespread interest aroused by the recent publication of the two great English Dictionaries of the Bible, the numerous queries touching Biblical difficulties in the "Open Letters" column of

[1] Fulliquet, "Les expériences religieuses d'Israël," p. 2.

the "Sunday School Times"— these things are of real significance. Any powerful book, presupposing the critical standpoint, is discussed, even when it is not read, throughout the length and breadth of the churches; and it is sure of an answer, whether of judicial calmness or of hysterical abuse. The abuse, though not justified, is not unintelligible, when one considers how serious the issue is felt on all sides to be. As competent an authority as Mr. C. G. Montefiore[1] believes that the movement must issue either in Christian Unitarianism or in Jewish "Reform." The new methods, it is believed, have shaken the old doctrines: they have affected — some would say destroyed — the power of the Bible as a manual of devotion and as the source of theology. Indeed, Canon Girdlestone, one of the more courteous opponents of the movement, at least in its more extravagant phases, maintains that "mission work at home and abroad would be paralyzed if the new criticism were allowed to have free course among us."[2]

One of the most interesting features in the whole situation is not so much the literary energy of the critical school — though that alone would betoken an extraordinary interest and enthusiasm[3] — but the fact

[1] "Jewish Quarterly Review," October, 1901, p. 148.

[2] "Doctor Doctorum," p. 185.

[3] In this connection, mention should be made of the publication of a new Dutch translation of the Old Testament, with introductions (1st part, 1899; 2d, 1901), designed to satisfy the demands of scientific scholarship, and executed by four of Holland's greatest scholars (Kuenen, Hooykaas, Kosters, and Oort), the first three of whom died in the course of the work, which was brought to a completion by the indefatigable labors of Oort. A new German translation of the Old Testament, edited by Kautzsch, assisted by ten other scholars, appeared in

that so much of that energy is devoted to the popularizing of critical results. Some of the work of the greatest scholars both in England and Germany was delivered before popular audiences or has been presented in popular form. It is enough to mention Professor Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," "The Prophets of Israel," and "The Religion of the Semites;" Cornill's "Prophets of Israel,"[1] and Harnack's "What is Christianity?"[2] Occasionally books dealing with the history or the religion frankly presuppose the critical standpoint, such as Gray's "The Divine Discipline of Israel;" G. A. Smith's "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament;" Ottley's "History of the Hebrews," or his Bampton Lectures on "Aspects of the Old Testament;" Budde's "Religion of Israel to the Exile;" Kent's "History of the Hebrew People." An American series on "The Messages of the Bible" has for its avowed purpose to enable any reader of the Bible to understand its meaning as a devout scholar of to-day does. Some of the best volumes in the "Expositor's Bible" series are written by scholars whose sympathies with the critical standpoint are well

1890–94. In accordance with a widely expressed desire, a popular edition of the latter book, omitting all critical comment, was published in 1899. We have not yet in English anything corresponding to either of those translations. The gap will no doubt be filled in due time by "The Students' Old Testament, logically and chronologically arranged and translated" (Scribner's), on which Professor Kent of Yale University is now engaged.

[1] "Der israelitische Prophetismus."

[2] "Das Wesen des Christentums." To the books above mentioned may now be added Kautzsch's lectures on "The Poetry and the Poetical Books of the Old Testament" (1902, not translated).

known; those, *e. g.* on Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, Daniel, and others. Most of the contributors to the leading theological magazines of Britain and America, exclusive of those which are practically, if not avowedly, conservative, write from the critical standpoint. Numberless efforts are made by scholars to reconcile the religious public to the critical attitude from which it stands aloof; books, *e. g.* like Cheyne's "Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism," Peters' "The Old Testament and the New Scholarship," and "Contentio Veritatis," a recent volume by Oxford scholars who believe that "a very considerable restatement and even reconstruction of parts of our religious teaching is inevitable."[1]

Nor is this literary activity confined to the representatives of the University and the theological seminary; the movement is supported and even championed by some of the greatest preachers of the day, among whom Dr. R. F. Horton occupies an honored place. Significant in this connection is the volume on "The Messages of the Old Testament," by the late G. H. C. Macgregor, which frankly accepts many of the critical results, such as that "prediction was not the chief function of the prophet."[2] "Where Scripture is silent, we should be very careful not to make the word of God responsible for our traditional ascriptions."[3] "The framework" of Judges "is of much later date than the theories fitted on to it."[4] "The books of Samuel are undoubtedly compilations."[5] Sometimes, indeed, elaborate replies, such

[1] p. vii. [2] p. 66. [3] p. 74.
[4] p. 90. [5] p. 116.

as "Lex Mosaica," and Green's volume on "The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch," are written on the other side.[1] But the literary enterprise and enthusiasm displayed by the critical school is nothing short of remarkable. Slowly but surely it is disarming hostility and forming a not inconsiderable body of public opinion, so much so that a reviewer in "Bibliotheca Sacra"[2] complains that "the results of the destructive critics cease to become tentative inferences, and appear as dogmas, which the reader is to receive on the strength of a new tradition."[3]

Now what precisely is at stake in this controversy? What are the interests that seem to be disregarded, and the objects that seem to be menaced by Higher Criticism? (i) In the first place, it is charged with a reckless disregard of tradition, a tradition which for over two millennia has satisfied the Jewish and the Christian Church. A not unnatural suspicion is raised by the demand that the belief of many centuries be set aside by the work of several decades. But it has to be remembered that unless for a sporadic protest here and there, the belief of the centuries was not seriously investigated till a century and a half ago. An unchallenged tradition has no more value at the end of twenty centuries than at the be-

[1] A recent editorial in the "Sunday School Times" (Jan. 31, 1903) regretfully admits the "fact that now exists, to the shame of conservative biblical scholars, — namely, that they are placing before the public no great works which at all compare in elaborateness and painstaking with those issued by their opponents."

[2] January, 1902, p. 199.

[3] This is a real danger against which scholars are anxious to guard. See the chapter on the "Essence of Protestantism."

ginning, and its value then is precisely the thing to be investigated.

(ii) More important, however, is the charge that the credibility of the Bible is at stake. This has been thoroughly dissipated, it is urged, by current critical processes. The Pentateuch in particular has suffered most severely, and has to be surrendered, as an historical authority, almost in its entirety. The history which it contains is not only meagre: it is partly imaginary and partly false. It has completely inverted the real course of Israel's religious development. The elaborated law is not a product of the earliest, but of the latest, times; it belongs not to Moses, but to Judaism. The professedly historical portions are largely a mixture of myth and legend, which at best have an historical kernel. The mighty patriarchs of the early days were not men of flesh and blood at all; they are reduced by criticism to personifications of virtues, or to tribes, or, at best, to tribal heroes. Much of what is commonly regarded as distinctive of the Bible, *e. g.* the theophanies, seems to be evaporated by critical processes. The books which have been supposed to be, if not contemporary with the incidents they record, at any rate very early, are brought down to so late a date as to seem to invalidate, or at least to weaken very considerably their testimony to an early time.[1] Even those who would repudiate the strong language of a certain conservative scholar that the books are, on this view, "a conscious and painstaking forgery,"

[1] Barry, "Some Lights of Science on the Faith," p. 280; Bredenkamp, "Gesetz und Propheten," p. 173.

"gangrened with fraud," [1] yet have an uneasy feeling that this attitude to the Bible is not quite compatible with a real deference to its authority.

(iii) The critical attitude to prophecy has also given rise to much apprehension. It is often conceived to be a covert, or even open attack, on the predictive power of the prophets; and, as predictive prophecy was for long considered to be one of the chief bulwarks of revealed religion, the critical attitude is felt to be a direct attack on the essentials of the faith. Not only prophecy proper is thus affected, but naturally also the predictive parts of the historical books: any promise, *e. g.* to Abraham, that his posterity should one day inherit the land, is the later historian's interpretation of a contemporary fact — a literary device justified by the fact that God sees the end from the beginning.[2] The churches hold that, within the field of prophetic prediction, nothing is of such vital moment as Messianic prophecy, in the narrower sense of definite predictions bearing directly on the life and sufferings of Christ; and any rejection of, or even indifference to, the predictive element, appears to involve an inability to appreciate this central fact of revelation, and the subtle unity that binds Testament to Testament.

(iv) One of the features regarded as most painful and surprising in the attitude of the critics to Old Testament questions is their apparent indifference to the explicit language of the New Testament. Many

[1] Kennedy, "Old Testament Criticism and the Rights of the Unlearned," pp. 62, 66.

[2] Fulliquet, "Les expériences religieuses," p. 15.

of its words appear to put beyond all reasonable doubt the authorship of particular books and the interpretation of particular passages; yet the critic discusses and conjectures and concludes, as if these things had for him no existence. Professor Clemen, one of the ablest New Testament scholars in Germany, roundly says that Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament has in certain of its applications to be given up.[1]

(v) But the most distressing surprise of all is the discovery that the words of Christ seem to meet with no more deference from the critics than the other words of the New Testament. The authority and finality which they deny to the New Testament in general, they deny to Him in particular. Now to most minds this is intolerable. It is easy to see that a very complex Christological question is raised here — a question affecting both the nature and mission of Christ. But it is maintained by the opponents of criticism that that question must not be answered by assuming either accommodation or ignorance on the part of Christ: we are not at liberty to suppose either that He did not know or that He deliberately misstated what He knew. If then He must have known, and if He expressed an opinion on those subjects, are we not bound by the opinion He expressed? The dilemma is a grave one, seeming as it does to affect the authority of Christ.

(vi) The fundamental objection to the newer criticism, however, it is argued, is that it seems to ignore, where it does not deny, the supernatural. Its watchword is evolution, and it has no place for miracle.

[1] "Studien und Kritiken," 1902, p. 187.

Sometimes the obvious, though unexpressed, assumption underlying the presentation of the history is that miracles are impossible; and even when their abstract possibility is conceded, the evidence is depreciated. Many of the most thrilling sections of Old Testament story, *e. g.* the story of Elijah, are thus relegated to the domain of legend, and the miraculous elements involved are in this way conveniently got rid of. Thus the history of Israel loses precisely the very thing that has often been regarded as peculiarly distinctive of it, and Israel appears in history on a level with the other peoples, an aspect in which — on the testimony of her literature — she steadily refused to regard herself. "The new criticism is found to be one with the old rationalism," and it is felt that it is only a question of time till the supernatural in the New Testament, even in the person of Christ, will be as readily denied as the supernatural in the Old has been. A non-miraculous Old Testament history will issue in a non-miraculous Jesus; and then where are we? Christianity will then be, in the famous phrase of Kuenen, but one of the principal world religions, "nothing less and nothing more."

(vii) The result will be that for the religious man, no authority will be left; at least, not the authority which the Christian counts paramount. For a Bible whose history is largely idealized and whose prophecy is not predictive, for a Bible out of whose every page the supernatural seems to have been adroitly eliminated, it is obvious that authority can no longer be claimed in the old sense — so runs the argument — nor yet can it be claimed for a Christ who shared the

errors of His contemporaries, and whose knowledge, in important directions, was limited. As a speaker bluntly said at a recent meeting in Glasgow, "It is impossible to believe at the same time that the Bible is a book of blunders, and in any reasonable sense the word of God."

(viii) Meantime, what is the preacher to do? His task is unspeakably hard. His text-book is the Bible, the very book which is treated in so cavalier a fashion, and whose plainest statements are so coolly traversed by the men who are giving their lives to the study of it. Is it any wonder that some, in their intellectual suspense, are disposed to

> "Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
> Hath lifted but a little;"

and that others are disposed to wash their hands of a criticism which presumptuously challenges the statements of a book that has been as a lamp to the centuries, and that has won the reverence of millions?

All these sacred interests, then, seem to be imperilled by the newer criticism. The situation can be concretely illustrated by two recent episodes in America and Germany. A Methodist Episcopal Professor, holding the chair of English Literature in a University in the United States, created a great sensation, not only in his own church, but far beyond, by a publication in which he freely discussed, among other things, the question of legend in the Bible, maintaining, with reference to such stories as those of Elijah, Elisha, and the men in the fiery furnace, that some of them were crude and childish, others

pathetic and sublime, but that they are all alike legendary and not historic. He frankly maintained that it was impossible to draw any dividing line between the miracles of the Old Testament and those of the New.

A German Professor,[1] whose criticism is by no means radical, and whose interests are essentially constructive, had published an article on the criticism of the Old Testament. It was severely criticised in the "Magazine for evangelical Lutheran pastors" in Bavaria, the following being the chief points of the indictment. (a) The Professor was said to be putting a powerful weapon into the hands of the critics on the left wing. (b) He seemed to attach no credibility to the Biblical sources for the times of Moses. (c) An honest minister, who believed in the Professor's position, could no longer represent the creation, the fall, etc., as historical. (d) People will never learn to distinguish the religious value of a narrative from its historical credibility: they will say, "What is not true, does not concern me." (e) Indifference to the historicity of the Old Testament will be transferred to the New. (f) The whole position will lead not only to contempt for the Old Testament, but to the renunciation of Christ and of all moral authority. "If the curse is only a voice from the realm of fable, redemption from the curse will be held of no account." Of course, Professor Köhler was astonished at this criticism, and denied the justice of it; but it shows the almost fierce interest that is taken in such discus-

[1] Köhler, "Ueber Berechtigung der Kritik des Alten Testamentes," pp. 52–55.

sions by those engaged in the active ministry, and the seriousness with which they regard the issues at stake.

It would be futile to underestimate the significance of a movement which is raising such protests in widely different parts of the world. At the same time, some of the facts — especially the literary facts — making for the critical position are so incontrovertible, that large concessions are sometimes made even by the keenest opponents of that position as a whole. "No one denies," we are told,[1] "that many of the books are in the nature of compilations. . . . No one doubts that in the Old Testament, as we now have it, there are here and there omissions, repetitions, unauthorized additions, glosses, corruptions, and falsifications of the text." Bishop Ellicott admits distinct sources at least for the Book of Genesis,[2] and concedes "that the narrative of the Old Testament has obviously passed through the hands of a few successive editors, and that it would be simply contrary to all experience not to find that such procedures had imported some amount of divergences and inconsistencies."[3] Mr. G. T. Smith, too, enumerates among the concessions[4] the use of different documents in the Book of Genesis, and the existence of explanatory marginal notes which have crept into the text. According to Höpfl, a Roman Catholic scholar, it may be

[1] Blomfield, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," pp. 94, 95.

[2] "Christus Comprobator," p. 70. So H. A. Johnston, "Bible Criticism and the Average Man," pp. 83, 89.

[3] p. 77.

[4] "Critique on Higher Criticism," p. 43.

conceded that there are documentary sources in Genesis;[1] that there are linguistic reasons against attributing to David some of the seventy-three Psalms bearing his name;[2] that the estimate of the number of Israelites at the exodus, capable of bearing arms, at 600,000 is too high;[3] that in later times new laws not only may have been, but actually were, incorporated in the original Mosaic code,[4] — this is a great concession, and would carry any one who makes it a long way; that a development, an advance, did actually take place in the religious conceptions of Israel.[5] Very significant is his concession[6] relative to Messianic prophecy, that "many predictions which count as Messianic, and are interpreted by the evangelists of Christ, refer primarily to other events, to future fortunes of the Israelitish people." Principal Cave remarks, "The composite structure of Genesis I hold to be proved."[7] Dr. Green's successor in Princeton asserts that "this [*i. e.* the Old Testament department] is quite ready to admit the possibility, or

[1] "Die höhere Bibelkritik," p. 31.

[2] p. 43. So Rev. Alexander Wright, who believes that twenty out of the seventy-three psalms ascribed to David may be rescued for him, yet admits that he has "been compelled to abandon belief in the trustworthiness of the titles prefixed to the psalms, as a whole." "The Psalms of David and the Higher Criticism," p. ix.

[3] p. 53. [4] p. 56. [5] p. 60.

[6] p. 101. Professor Volck, "Heilige Schrift und Kritik," pp. 83–90, admits the composite and non-Mosaic authorship of the Hexateuch, the exilic authorship of Isaiah xl.–lxvi., the unreliability of the superscriptions of the Psalms, and a late date for Daniel in its present form. "That various sources lie at the basis of the Pentateuch no one can deny who without prejudice abandons himself to the impression which the history makes upon the reader." p. 83.

[7] "The Battle of the Standpoints," p. 33.

even the probability, of occasional duplicates in the Pentateuch." [1]

The appeal is often made to Sayce; then to Sayce let us go.[2] He assures us that "modern research has shown that a considerable part of the most ancient literature of all nations was of composite origin, more especially where it was of a historical or a religious character. . . . The most ancient books that have come down to us are, with few exceptions, essentially compilations." [3] "About the general fact of the composite character of the Pentateuch competent critics of all schools are now agreed." [4] He further assures us that "there are narratives and statements in the Old Testament as to which the scepticism of the critic

[1] "The Presbyterian and Reformed Review," April, 1902, p. 193. "But there is no basis," he subsequently adds, "for a belief that duplication is characteristic and prevalent."

[2] Archæological results are often represented as making for the traditional view of the Bible, and against the critical. Such a representation is quite misleading. See Driver's very careful estimate in his Essay on "Hebrew Authority" in Hogarth's "Authority and Archæology, Sacred and Profane;" and cf. Peters' well-balanced summary, "The Old Testament and the New Scholarship," p. 245. "Hebrew history as recorded in those books [*i. e.* Samuel, Kings, and the Prophets] is proved by the comparison [*i. e.* with Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian records] to be honest and trustworthy, but not infallible, as, for instance, in the matter of chronology, nor altogether without bias, and a natural inclination toward a patriotic coloring of the story. Chronicles, on the other hand, is shown to be of little or no value for purposes of political history, while Esther, Daniel, and Jonah, once supposed to be historical, are made to appear fictitious." Cf. also p. 253. "The [Egyptian] monuments do not necessarily contradict the Hebrew records as to the earlier periods, but neither can we say with any certainty that they support the Bible narrative. This I say, in deprecation of the statements, published from time to time, that archæology has proved the truth of the Bible story."

[3] "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 3.

[4] p. 31.

has been shown to be justified. The judgment he has passed on the so-called historical chapters of the Book of Daniel has been abundantly verified by the recent discoveries of Assyriology."[1] "The 'higher' criticism of the Old Testament has been justified in its literary analysis of the Books of Moses."[2] He further assures us of a "constant exaggeration of numbers on the part of the Chronicler." "He [*i. e.* the Chronicler] cared as little for history in the modern European sense of the word as the Oriental of to-day, who considers himself at liberty to embellish or modify the narrative he is repeating in accordance with his fancy or the moral he wishes to draw from it."[3] "Oriental archæology makes it clear that his statements are not always exact. We cannot follow him with the same confidence as that with which we should follow the author of the Books of Kings. His use of the documents which lay before him was uncritical; the inferences he drew from his materials were not always sound, and he makes them subserve the theory on which his work is based."[4]

Doubtless some of the most important features of the Higher Criticism, as enumerated above, are not touched by these concessions; but there can be no denying that, so far as they go, they are very substantial.

Still, in spite of these concessions, it is notorious that criticism as a whole has roused, and is rousing, a

[1] "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 27.
[2] p. 34. [3] p. 464.
[4] pp. 462, 463. The Chronicler, *e. g.*, erroneously infers from Kings that Pul and Tiglath-pileser, whose name he misspells, were different persons. 1 Chr. v. 26.

very widespread opposition. Why is this? and how far is it justified? In the first place, the very words Higher Criticism are odious to many, because of what they seem to involve. To not a few, Biblical criticism of any kind is practically synonymous with impiety: what is man that he should dare to criticise the word of God? And "higher" suggests presumption. The term is no doubt unfortunate, but fair minds should not allow the term to create an initial prejudice against the process for which the term stands. Criticism is not destruction. It is judgment: it is the effort of the mind to understand and relate the facts. Higher Criticism is — very briefly and roughly put — the criticism of the contents and all that they involve, as opposed to Lower Criticism, which is the criticism of the text.

But even when the prejudice against the name Higher Criticism is overcome, there is enough, it is urged, in even a superficial study of its nature and tendencies, to provoke distrust. Its supporters admit that it is "an extremely intricate, complex, and elaborate intellectual procedure."[1] The nomenclature is pronounced repellent. To designate the imaginary authors of the Pentateuch by unattractive algebraic symbols, J^1, E^2, P^2, etc., is, besides being gratuitous folly, a mockery and an impiety. The author of articles on "The Old Testament and the Christian Church" in the "Evangelical Lutheran Church News" affirms that J, E, D, and P are figures without flesh and blood. Professor Kautzsch points out that some

[1] Rev. W. H. Hazard, in Gibson's "Reasons for the Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch," p. 7.

of his remarks betray absolute ignorance of the more recent Pentateuchal criticism, "and the reader who understands somewhat more of it, finds it now quite intelligible why and in what sense J, E, D, and P are 'figures without flesh and blood' for the writer of the articles."[1]

Other charges of a more serious nature are urged. It is pointed out that criticism often assumes a flippant and irreverent tone; that it has no sense of the dignity of the great themes on which it lays unholy hands; that it does not even know its own mind — witness the notorious discrepancies among the critics themselves. It is marred from beginning to end by subjective considerations, and by presuppositions, which beg the whole question in advance. Its arguments are strained and unconvincing. The reasoning even of the scholars who are regarded as the most reverent and cautious will often not commend themselves to ordinary minds.[2] The references frequently fail to support the conclusions drawn from them. The bolder spirits, at any rate, are as unreasonably dogmatic as the traditionalists whom they condemn and seek to displace; while the more cautious besprinkle their pages with a profusion of "perhaps,

[1] Kautzsch, "Bibelwissenschaft und Religionsunterricht," pp. 10, 11. Cf. Blomfield, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," p. 55. "These documents are so frequently spoken of as though they had a real, substantial existence, like the acknowledged works of well-known authors, that it is well to remind ourselves, once for all, that, as distinct entities, they exist only in the speculations of German or Dutch scholars and their English followers, having no atom of proof except that which is derived from what is called 'internal evidence,' *i. e.* the examination of the books themselves."

[2] Blomfield, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," p. 8.

possibly, probably, very likely, no doubt," etc., which is provoking to one who has been accustomed to find in the Bible nothing but infallible certainties from beginning to end. The critics, it is maintained, are tactless: they spring their most ungrounded speculations on innocent and unsuspecting minds, discuss the Bible with a freedom which perplexes and confuses those who simply trust its every word, and entirely disintegrate the moral and religious beliefs of large numbers of well-meaning people, so that one is hardly surprised at Talmage's demand that "the critics of the Bible go clear over, where they belong, to the devil's side." This tactlessness is only another side, it is urged, of the general indifference of the critics to the welfare of the Church. They are willing to speculate; but they will not stand in the fighting line. They do not know how sore the battle is; and so they not only do not help, but, by their speculations, they hinder.

This last charge cannot with any fairness be urged against the critics of the English-speaking world. Professor Henry Drummond was not an Old Testament critic, but he was in the profoundest sympathy with the whole movement of which this is a part, and the world will not readily forget his intimate association with Mr. Moody in work that was distinctly evangelical. Nor can any one be blind to the very conspicuous services of Professor George Adam Smith, in making large and unfamiliar tracts of the Bible live and throb, as, to the ordinary student and pastor, they had never done before. One of the best known supporters of the critical movement in America has

for years contributed weekly a column to the "Sunday School Times," which is regarded by many readers, who are quite innocent of criticism, as one of the strongest features of the paper. The fact that the critic may dearly love the church of Christ, and work with all his heart and mind for her welfare, is almost too obvious to need elaboration. Indeed, by the very intimate relation that subsists, for the most part, throughout the English-speaking world, between the churches and their theological colleges or seminaries, the breach between the Professor and the pastor is never likely to be a very wide one. It is different in Germany, where the theological professor has seldom been a pastor, and where he sustains practically no formal relation to the activities of the Church. There theology is more likely to be studied as a pure science. The gain is that theology learns to come to terms with the other sciences; the loss frequently is that the most essential factor in theological investigation is ignored. The isolation of theology from the life of the Church is even more fatal than her isolation from the sister sciences, because the Bible is related to the life and faith of the Church. It originally expressed that faith; now it nourishes and supports it: so that a coldly scientific attitude to the Bible which ignores its inseparable relation to the life of the Church is a manifest injustice. But the point is that that injustice is little likely to be done the Bible by English and American scholarship. The theological Professor has often been — in many churches has almost always been — a preacher. In any case, he is usually in direct contact with the life and movements of the

Church, and he has at heart the things that concern her peace. Tactlessness there may be among the critics, as among other men, but not indifference to the cause of Christ and His Church. Indeed, it is admitted by the fairer opponents of criticism that many of its representatives are men of high character and reverent spirit. "They are not writing against miracles, against prophecy, or even against inspiration. They are simply attempting to adjust what they hold on critical grounds with what they believe as Christians." [1] "Perhaps," the author just quoted says elsewhere,[2] "we have been in too great haste to condemn others, as if they were almost infidels, for holding views which they believe to be consistent with faith in Christ." It is a mistake to suppose that the critics are concerned only with finical and irrelevant literary problems, or are interested in depreciating revelation and disturbing faith. Some of the greatest of them have repeatedly confessed that the aim of all their critical work has been to bring into clearer light the beauty and power of the Divine Word. Critical discussion is justified only as it contributes to that end. The latest, most brilliant, and enthusiastic commentary on Genesis, by Professor Gunkel of Berlin, professedly keeps in view throughout the needs of the men engaged in the ministry. Professor Kautzsch of Halle, in a public address delivered in June, 1900, before the Evangelical Union of the Province of Saxony, expressly laid down as one of his theses that "Biblical criticism is never an end in itself, but always only a means to an end" — the end being the understanding

[1] Girdlestone, "Doctor Doctorum," p. 157. [2] p. 186.

either of the contents of Scripture in detail, or of the history of revelation as a whole.

Whatever the deficiencies of individual critics may be, it is at least clear that their general attitude is quite compatible with a reverent appreciation of the Bible as a revelation of God, and with a deep desire to further the interests of the Church of Christ, by presenting the positive religious truth of the Bible. Granted. But how may that general attitude be more particularly defined? Every man who desires to have a just and intelligent opinion will have to discover this by independent study: he must, so far as he has opportunity, master the critical argument for himself, and not trust to the representations of its opponents. But to those who have no time or taste for such study it will be instructive to listen to the calm words of one of England's most accomplished, courteous, and fair-minded scholars: "It is impossible to resist the impression that the critical argument is in the stronger hands, and that it is accompanied by a far greater command of the materials. The cause of criticism, if we take the word in a wide sense and do not identify it too closely with any particular theory, is, it is difficult to doubt, the winning cause. Indeed criticism is only the process by which theological knowledge is brought into line with other knowledge; and as such it is inevitable."[1] Again, "the human mind will in the end accept that theory which covers the greatest number of particular facts and harmonizes best with the sum total of knowledge."[2]

[1] Sanday, "Inspiration," p. 116.

[2] p. 215. Delitzsch, after defending the traditional views of the

But to say that the method is right is not to say that it always leads to definite and unassailable results. The facts are so comparatively few and often so difficult to co-ordinate, that the interpretation of them will — in some cases for long, and in a few cases perhaps for ever — be nothing more than provisional. But to admit that is not to admit the invalidity of the method. In spite of numerous differences among the critics themselves, an astonishing unanimity has been reached in the solution of many problems, including some of the most intricate, *e. g.* the analysis of the Hexateuch; and this is conceded even by opponents. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that criticism does not stand for a definite set of results. It stands for a method, an attitude, a temper — the temper which patiently collects and impartially examines all the available facts, and allows them to make their own impression upon the mind of the investigator.

Now, scientific investigation in any department of knowledge is never an easy thing. To understand the processes by which its results are reached demands time, sympathy, perseverance, and patience. The results cannot be fairly criticised apart from the processes by which they are reached; and any man who fails to bring to the investigation the qualities enumerated may find the processes unattractive enough; but he must not call them ridiculous because he has not been at the pains to understand them. No one

Old Testament for the best part of his life with extraordinary learning, vigor, and acuteness, finally adopted all the main points of the critical position. The concessions of such a man are hardly to be overestimated.

expects the working minister to be familiar with the elaborate details of critical processes: that is the labor of a lifetime. It is easy to ridicule the Polychrome Bible, or the "rainbow" Bible, as it is derisively called; but such a Bible was never intended to be a people's Bible. To suppose this, as the editor of a new German translation of the Bible points out, is to betray a considerable degree of thoughtlessness. Such a Bible, he reminds us, is designed to satisfy the scientific needs of theologians, and also of the more educated laity. But "the folly of giving out this work for a people's Bible never entered any of our heads."[1]

This distinction, then, must be carefully borne in mind. The critical processes are for those who have time and inclination to investigate, though in outline they may be easily followed by any intelligent man; but most religious men will have to do only with the results. The *teacher* is justified in endeavoring to initiate his students into the processes by which he reaches the results on which he builds: whether he will actually do so or not, will depend partly on local circumstances, partly on the time at his disposal, and on other considerations. But the *preacher* is — shall we say, bound — to ignore these processes in his public work; bound by his common sense and by the

[1] "Studien und Kritiken," 1901, p. 682. The Rev. John Urquhart's pamphlet on "The Coming Bible" (published at Cambuslang, Scotland), with its colored two-page illustration from Leviticus, and its allusions to "forgery," etc., will only startle those who do not really understand critical methods (cf. Chapter VI.), and who forget that this is a Bible not for popular use, but for the scientific study of the Old Testament.

nature of his calling. And to say this is not to admit that there is an exoteric and an esoteric teaching: one for the class-room and another for the Church. The pulpit does not exist for the exhibition of critical method. The preacher's business is to call men to God, by the presentation of positive, compelling truth, especially of the Truth incarnate; and he is bound, by the nature of his solemn office, to do so, as far as in him lies, without causing one of the little ones before him to stumble. His sense of perspective and of the proprieties, to say nothing of his high calling, should preserve him from the folly of presenting irrelevant or confusing facts to the needy souls who look to him for help. These facts may be relevant to his work as a thorough student of Scripture, but not to his function as a preacher of God and an ambassador of Christ. In that capacity he will be "too full of the awe of direct vision to lose himself in the arid wastes of criticism, or to be led astray by the pedantries of scientific investigation." [1]

The true Biblical critic will always remember that the minister's task is everywhere already a hard enough one, and that what he needs is to be strengthened, not confused. He will be thankful for the truth that will preach. It is a cheap sarcasm to say, as some one has said, that what we need is not bread-knives, but bread. We need both if we are to dine like civilized men. Still there is some truth in the sarcasm, as we can live by bread alone, but not by

[1] Beard, "The Hibbert Lectures," 1883, p. 430. These words, relatively severe, are thoroughly appropriate as against the critic who forgets that criticism is only a means.

knives alone. The Biblical critic, if he is to do his work well, must remember that he is a servant of Christ far more than of his methods, and that his work upon the Bible is essentially work for the Church. He will therefore avoid all that is sensational and that would give needless offence. He will not be dogmatic where the evidence is uncertain. He will not allow his inferences to run ahead of his facts. In this sense he will be a "safe" man — a word much abused in this connection, for it usually denotes a man who contrives to keep in line with conventional belief. But such a man is no more safe than the man who opposes convention for opposition's sake. The only really "safe" man is the man who loves the truth and the brethren, and who is prepared to go wherever the truth leads him. We often hear, too, of certain men as "advanced," "going too far," etc. In the sense in which the phrase is intended it is, strictly speaking, a meaningless one. If the method be wrong, to go any way with it is a mistake; if it be right, we cannot go too far. Sound criticism, like Aristotle's virtue, is a mean: you cannot have too much of it. Where it is defective, let it be corrected, not by abuse, but by a sounder and more penetrating criticism, which will call attention to factors ignored or exaggerated.

If this be so — if the critic have a passion for truth, if he have a touch of the prophet, if he love the Church and live for her life — the gulf between criticism and the Church is not impassable, nor even wide. Indeed it is being bridged over in our day, and that not only on the confession of scholars, with whom the

wish might be supposed to be father to the thought, but also on that of the men who are themselves in the thick of the fight. Let us first hear the scholars. Professor B. W. Bacon asserts the "firm confidence that a general acquaintance with the discoveries claimed to have been made by the higher criticism in the Pentateuch can only conduce to the lasting benefit of His cause, who said, 'Thy word is Truth.'"[1] Professor G. F. Moore remarks that the apprehension of the consequences to which the results of criticism should give rise, if they were generally accepted, is groundless. "That a better understanding of the way in which God has revealed Himself in the history of the true religion, whose early chapters are written in the Old Testament, will diminish men's faith in religion or the Scripture, or their reverence for them, is no less unreasonable than to suppose that better knowledge of Astronomy or Geology must impair faith in the God of Heaven and Earth."[2] "I cannot help thinking," says Professor Sanday, "that the critical and historical way of looking at the Bible is calculated to win back some of its inspiring power."[3] And elsewhere, "The proper fruit of criticism and history" is a "vital appreciation of the real fundamentals of Christianity."[4] To those who feel that some of his results "threaten their faith in the Scriptures," Professor H. G. Mitchell gives the assurance that "their anxiety is groundless," and assigns his reasons.[5] The case is put still more strongly by a

[1] Bacon, "The Genesis of Genesis," p. xiii.
[2] Id. p. xxx.
[3] "Oracles of God," p. 87. [4] p. 88.
[5] "The World before Abraham," p. iv.

French Roman Catholic scholar. "The danger at the present hour is not that of advancing on the path of science: it is that of standing still, denying the movement which is accomplished and accomplishing itself round about us." [1]

Now let us hear the testimony of two clergymen, distinguished members of different communions. From Canon Henson we have the following confession, delivered in the course of a sermon in Westminster Abbey: "These far-reaching and at first sight alarming changes worked by criticism in our whole view and treatment of the Scriptures will, I believe, be found to minister to religious peace, for the old springs of exasperation and conflict are now cut off." Dr. R. F. Horton asserts that "Higher Criticism, so much dreaded by pious souls, is furnishing a conclusive answer to the untiring opponents of Revelation." [2] It "has solved far more difficulties than it has suggested, and gives us back the books which it has handled, not only intact in themselves, but accompanied by a genuine explanation of their apparent flaws and imperfections." [3] "In the line where the Revelation of the book is to be sought, the conclusions of Criticism have made, and can make, no difference at all, while they have furnished a sufficient explanation of those confusions and discrepancies which, according to former views of the composition, presented insurmountable difficulties." [4]

[1] Loisy, "Études Bibliques," p. 48.

[2] "Revelation and the Bible," p. 61.

[3] p. 91.

[4] p. 105. Cf. Lyman Abbott, "The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews," p. v. The conclusions of the critical school "do

There are many signs that the presentation of the critical results of Bible study not only can be, but is being understood and even welcomed by the rank and file of the laity. A German Professor tells of an evangelical working men's association which had been perplexed by a study of the laws of the Old Testament, and was anxious to hear the question discussed by a specialist. The Professor undertook the task; and they listened to him, he tells us, not only with interest, but with grateful and intelligent appreciation, as he sketched the three great codes, pointed out their salient features, and showed how each in its day subserved the purpose of God. A similar experiment by a Methodist Professor in Canada was attended with similar success.[1]

Criticism is helpful, but not necessary to the understanding of the *essential* truth of the Bible. In days when other methods of interpretation prevailed, the Bible compelled men to listen to it, to love it, and to live by it. Its message to the heart is too honest and obvious to evade. The Bible can be trusted to take care of itself. We know in what we have believed. "These are days," says the venerable F. B. Meyer, "in which men tremble for the ark of the testimony, as though the Word of God were in serious

not imperil spiritual faith, — on the contrary, they enhance the value of the Bible as an instrument for the cultivation of the spiritual faith."

[1] One who would wish to see how the preacher can make the results of the modern criticism of the Pentateuch directly contribute to the edification of the Church, could not do better than read Rev. Buchanan Blake's recent book on "Joseph and Moses, the Founders of Israel." The two prophetic sources for these lives are there taken apart and printed continuously, and these tales are then expounded as independent narratives.

peril; but those of us who have approved its living power in solving the questions and problems of the inner life . . . are not anxious as to the issue. The heart of man will never allow itself to be robbed of the Bible."[1]

[1] From the preface to the late G. H. C. Macgregor's "Messages of the Old Testament."

CHAPTER II

THE DISCOURTESIES OF CRITICISM

RIDICULE may have its place, but that place is hardly within the department of criticism; and it is with some surprise that we read the following confession from a well-informed opponent of criticism: "In the following pages, while the attempt has been made to grapple fairly and fully with some few of the difficulties presented by modern criticism of the Old Testament, *the writer has not considered himself precluded from occasionally employing the method of ridicule.*"[1] One feels inclined to ask, *Cui bono?* Who is benefited by such a method? Obviously neither the critics nor their opponents. Ridicule may provoke, but it will seldom convince. Still, it is lamentably true that this method, which is so little calculated to conciliate or instruct an opponent, is but too commonly used by both parties; and it is with great satisfaction that we find another opponent of the movement entering on a difficult branch of the controversy with the noble words: "May no bitter word be uttered; for the ground on which we are standing is indeed holy ground."[2]

[1] Blomfield, "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," p. 38. The italics are ours.

[2] Girdlestone, "Doctor Doctorum," p. 13.

The greatest injustice that one can do to an opponent's position is to misrepresent it. This is a species of injustice from which the critical position has often suffered. Doubtless the misrepresentation is not always deliberate. Indeed it is not possible to represent any position — critical or any other — fairly and adequately without such a sympathetic study as is seldom given to it by one who approaches it for controversial purposes; but whether deliberate or not, misrepresentation is mischievous and unfair. A very earnest and courteous defender of the faith[1] avers that "the actual Moses of the analytical [*i. e.* critical] view is some unknown person or persons who lived ages afterwards in the declining days of the Exile. Does not common sense itself," he asks, "protest against such an absolute inversion of all historical testimony and all historical credibility?" Certainly, we reply; not only common sense, but the majority of the critics themselves, who, even on the admission of a conservative,[2] allow that Moses was an extraordinary personality. Dr. Lyman Abbott is much nearer the truth when he says that "substantially all critics recognize in Moses one of the greatest and most creative spirits of ancient history."[3]

Again, nothing is commoner than to contend that, on the critical view, the Pentateuch is reduced to a "patchwork," as it is derisively called. The word is an awkward one, but the fact which it covers is common enough in literature. In spite of the Rev. L. W.

[1] Ellicott, "Christus Comprobator," p. 81.
[2] Höpfl, "Die höhere Bibelkritik," p. 54.
[3] "The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews," p. 92.

Munhall's dictum[1] that "no other book was so constructed, no book could be so constructed," we have the evidence, already quoted, of so competent an authority as Professor Sayce to the contrary — to say nothing of modern novels and plays. As an illustration of the argument by which an attempt is sometimes made to refute the critical solution of difficulties, the following vigorous passage may be quoted: "A scissors exegesis is not American. Our public schools have taught us to be more accurate. To slice a verse or two out of a section, or to cut a verse into halves or thirds, may comport with German ideas of scholarship, but we are proud to say that it will never be patented in America. . . . To treat the Bible with such indignity and such bungling scholarship will never become an American custom."[2]

This last quotation, with its depreciation of German scholarship, furnishes us with a species of argument which is more common than convincing. We hear, *e. g.*, of certain "objections to the credibility of the Scriptures that are now paraded before the world by unconverted theological professors in German Universities, and then reproduced by foolish theological professors in Great Britain and America."[3] This might be excused in the heat of a public address,[4] but it is a little disappointing to find statements not very dis-

[1] "Anti-Higher Criticism," p. 10. So Behrends, "The Old Testament under Fire," p. 133. "It is simply incredible that Genesis was put together as the critics claim."

[2] G. T. Smith, "Critique on Higher Criticism," pp. 199, 200.

[3] Munhall, "Anti-Higher Criticism," p. 189.

[4] The chapters of this book were originally addresses delivered at a Bible Conference in Asbury Park, N. J., in 1893.

similar occurring on the pages of a learned theological review; as when we are assured, for example, that a certain interpretation of the language of the 51st Psalm is not surprising in "a wooden German critic, who would measure religious emotion with a foot-rule."[1] Even Bishop Ellicott, after admitting the great industry, the unexampled patience and singular insight, of the foreign scholars, suspects that they are destitute of "that cool common sense . . . which can never be dispensed with."[2] It would indeed be singular if scholars who possessed so many senses which are exceptional were destitute of that which was common; all the more that their opinions and attitude are largely shared by an ever-increasing number of scholars in English-speaking countries which are supposed to be pre-eminently gifted with that desirable commodity. The learned bishop is no doubt right in suspecting that "insular prejudice" has something to do with his opinion. The critic of the Higher Criticism to whom we have already referred deliberately ridicules the patient and indefatigable toil with which the German repeats his experiments and accumulates his facts.[3] It seems a poor *argumentum ad hominem.* Wooden heads are not the monopoly of any one country. There is at least as much likelihood in the truth being reached by a man who scorns delights and lives laborious days in the search for it, as by a man who ridicules those who take this trouble. An argument might be good though it came

[1] "Presbyterian and Reformed Review," January, 1902, p. 137.
[2] "Christus Comprobator," p. 36.
[3] G. T. Smith, "Critique," p. 301.

from Germany, just as it might be bad though it came from Britain or America. Its national origin has simply nothing to do with its essential value: that can be, and should be, tested by scientific canons.[1]

This method of what may be called argument by innuendo is not confined to the opponents of the critics; the critics themselves can use it when it serves them. An argument is not carried much farther, *e. g.* when we are told that "no *respectable* commentator" would countenance a certain interpretation of Genesis vi. in our day.[2] Standards of respectability are notoriously uncertain. Nor are we greatly edified to learn that it is "persons lacking in the literary sense" who take the early books of the Old Testament as statements of fact. Both parties too commonly assume that their view is the only one possible to a man of any real literary or spiritual insight. The great question, for example, of the true principle of progression manifested in the history of Israel is not exactly settled beyond dispute by the simple assertion that "to every one who has any spiritual perception," the traditional view is "immeasurably superior" to the critical.[3] A writer in "Bibliotheca Sacra"[4] affirms that those who think that the first and second chapters of Genesis contradict each other "betray a dulness of literary apprehension that makes an ordinary reader lose faith in their judgment." When we remember that this sweeping condemnation includes many men in

[1] For a fine tribute to the patient and thorough methods of Germany, see Froude's essay on the "Revival of Romanism," section viii.

[2] Briggs, "The Study of Holy Scripture," p. 333.

[3] J. Smith, "The Integrity of Scripture," p. 249.

[4] January, 1902, p. 201.

several lands whose literary instincts, as attested by their own literary work, are of the highest order, we begin to console ourselves with the reflection that standards of literary apprehension, like standards of respectability, are variable.

Misrepresentation and innuendo prove nothing; neither does caricature. Probably no feature of the Higher Criticism has suffered so much at the hands of the caricaturists as the compositeness of the Pentateuch and the customary nomenclature of the documents. "When the critic corrects his remark," we are airily told, "by saying 'five,' it can be shown that no smart critic is satisfied with less than seven. If he admits seven, nine can be laid before him; if he confesses there are eleven, thirteen will be produced, and so on, till he is weary, and yet there will be left seven baskets of fragments predicated to exist in the Pentateuch."[1] Even the uninitiated, one would suppose, would feel the injustice of this. Dr. Kennedy[2] informs his "unlearned" readers that "the process began modestly with A, B, C, D. But it grew till we have J, E, Q, P, — with J^1 and J^2, E^1 and E^2, P^1 and P^2 and P^3, D^1 and D^2, which represent different strata in the hypothetic original documents. . . . We ask with confidence whether the process alleged by the critics, or anything like it, can be made intelligible to any but the critics themselves? And it may be fairly asked whether it is intelligible even to them?" The answer is at hand. It is this: not only that the pro-

[1] G. T. Smith, "Critique on Higher Criticism," p. 304.

[2] "Old Testament Criticism and the Rights of the Unlearned," p. 69.

cess is intelligible to the critics themselves, but that it has, in Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," and elsewhere, been made thoroughly intelligible even to the man who is not an expert. These letters stand for the authors of documents; because we cannot name the men, it does not follow that the symbols which represent them are ridiculous. Such symbols may be prosaic, but they are useful.

It is further surprising, not to say painful, to find ridicule cast by honored scholars upon the long and necessarily difficult process by which the present critical position has been reached. We shall let Principal Cave present his case for the opposition; this he does in the form of a dialogue. "'Genesis, we aver, is a compilation of two documents, an Elohist and Jehovist document,' said the Decomposition-Critics about the beginning of the century. But, it was objected, no mere compilation could have produced such a book. 'Allow us to amend our theory,' replied the Decomposition-Critics, 'and permit us to say that Genesis, so far from being a mere compilation of two works, is a new and much enlarged edition of one man's work (the Elohist) by a second (the Jehovist).' But, it was objected, why speak of Genesis only, why not extend this process to all the Books of the Law? 'Why not, indeed,' replied the Decomposition-Critics, 'allow us to amend our theory again, and say that the whole Law, as well as Genesis, is the result of a supplementing by the Jehovist of the document of the Elohist?' But, again it was objected, so uniform a book as Deuteronomy could not have been the product of such a process. 'You are quite

right,' said the Decomposition-Critics; 'we will again amend our theory, and say that the Pentateuch is a supplementing by the Jehovist of two original works, written, one by the Elohist, and the other by the Deuteronomist.' But, it was again objected, the sections attributed to the Jehovist sometimes contained the name of Elohim, and sometimes showed the style of the Elohist. 'Again you are right,' say the Decomposition-Critics; 'we will amend our theory once more, and say that there are two Elohistic documents, an earlier and a later.' But, yet again it was objected, perhaps the order of writing is not Elohist, Deuteronomist, Jehovist. 'There is no perhaps in the question,' said the Decomposition-Critics. 'Allow us to amend our theory; we now desire to consider that writer as the latest whom we formerly considered the earliest, and we now declare the order of writing to be Jehovist, Deuteronomist, Elohist.' But, it was once more objected, there are facts which will not square with this view. 'Therefore we will amend our theory again,' said the Decomposition-Critics, 'manifestly it is too simple;' " and so on in this strain.[1] The passage is so characteristic of much of the opposition to Higher Criticism that no apology need be offered for quoting at such length. Now, such a statement may raise a laugh; but laughter is not argument. This caricature really conceals a delicate compliment to the critics. It shows that they were not irretrievably committed to theories, but were prepared to adjust the theories to meet new facts. And is not that how truth of every kind has grown — through the steady

[1] Cave, "The Battle of the Standpoints," pp. 44–46.

accumulation of facts, and the ceaseless modification of the theories that sought to account for them by the discovery of fresh facts? It is no disparagement to the critical position to say that it has always been willing to readjust itself, to reinstate elements that have been depreciated or ignored, and to meet new facts that have been discovered.[1]

Caricature is unworthy, but abuse is un-Christian; yet this is one of the weapons not uncommonly brought into the fray. Not a few books, articles, and reviews are plentifully besprinkled with the choicest theological Billingsgate. One gentleman defines his idea of a critic in the following expressive words: "I mean by professional critic one who spends his time and strength in trying to find some error or discrepancy in the Bible, and, if he thinks he does, rejoiceth as 'one who findeth great spoil;' who hopes, while he works, that he may succeed, thinking thereby to obtain a name and notoriety for himself."[2] In the light of the very different motives which we saw in Chapter I. to actuate the critics, such a definition may be safely left to refute itself. "Theological scavengers," "noisy and pretentious heralds of a Deutero-isaiah," with their "impudent assumptions" and their "moonshine conjectures" — these are the terms in which the truth of God is defended.[3] One may be

[1] A sympathetic knowledge of the history of criticism would furnish the best answer to the attacks upon its alleged unreasonableness. An admirable sketch of the "History of Hexateuch Criticism," by Professor W. G. Jordan, of Kingston, will be found in the "Queen's Quarterly," January, 1903, pp. 274–300.

[2] Munhall, "Anti-Higher Criticism," p. 9.

[3] Sir Robert Anderson speaks of "the foreign infidel type of scholar

pardoned for wondering whether such language, to say nothing of its vulgarity, can be supposed by any reasonable man to tend to edification; and we should with gladness pass it by, were it not that it is but too typical of much of the spirit in which criticism is opposed and the faith defended. The lowest depths were recently sounded by a paper which shall be nameless, but which commented on a gentleman who had the misfortune to differ from the editors, in the following terms: "We are pleased to present our readers this week with a portrait likeness of ——; pleased, not because this picture will satisfy curiosity, but because it carries with it a complete refutation of the thought that has been in some minds, that —— was a man of great depth and vast authority in the subject he has rashly entered." One can only say with sorrow, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." There is a time to be gentle, and a time to be severe; but there is never a time to be scurrilous.

It is astonishing to find that this abusive attitude is not confined to ephemeral magazines, or to the public platform, but has its representatives in sober theological monthlies and quarterlies. Not long ago two important contributions to the history of Israel's religion were dismissed, in a review as unjust as it was brief, by a sarcastic compliment to the excellence of the binding of the books. Book reviews are often

. . . as ignorant of man and his needs as a monk, and as ignorant of God and His ways as a monkey" ("The Bible and Modern Criticism," p. 19). This may be clever, but is it just? No more than Behrends' assertion that, according to criticism, "The history is fabricated and false from cover to cover" ("The Old Testament under Fire," p. 185). The cause of truth has little to gain from extravagances of this sort.

cruelly unfair, even in quarters where one would naturally expect to find conscience and justice. A book whose standpoint is not that of the reviewer is often condemned outright, without the faintest regard to the author's constructive interests or to the reverence of his spirit. Illustrations are legion. There are, of course, on both sides of the controversy many honorable exceptions.

There is not a superabundance of courtesy on the part of the controversialists for each other; but what, in particular, pains the defenders of the older position is that their opponents often seem to adopt so flippant a tone in their discussions of the Bible. It may be frankly confessed that the tone of the critics has often been needlessly, sometimes absurdly, offensive; though here it is only fair to say that their spirit and attitude cannot be correctly judged by such words as "fraud," "forgery," and the like, which appear plentifully enough on the pages of their opponents, but would be disowned as misleading by practically all the critics themselves. Still, it is nothing less than deplorable to find so great a scholar as Duhm[1] characterize the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm as "the emptiest production that ever blackened paper." Flippancies of this kind have done immeasurable harm to the cause of criticism. Again we would ask, *Cui bono?* No one is helped by such a criticism, and many will be provoked by it. It is more than flippant, it is unjust. It disqualifies the man who makes it from

[1] "Die Psalmen," p. 268. Much of the recent work of that admirable scholar is marred by a vehemence which is neither dignified nor necessary.

interpreting the meditative psalms. One who does not himself respond to the tender brooding regard for Scripture which shines through the Psalm should not scoff at the thing he cannot appreciate.

It is necessary, however, to distinguish between the flippancy which is never justified, and the humor which is often wholesome and luminant. There may easily be humor without irreverence. Gunkel, *e.g.*, seems to violate no canons of propriety when he gives as the reason for the choice of a rib as the material out of which woman was to be made, the fact that man had ribs enough and to spare;[1] nor yet again, when he contends that in the original story the wrestling of Jacob had nothing to do with prayer, for "in the wrestlings of prayer one does not dislocate one's thigh."[2] Of a similar kind is the remark of Wellhausen, quoted by Robertson Smith, that when the original text represents any one as eating, a compassionate editor usually gives him something to drink. This is nothing but a happy characterization of a common textual phenomenon. Other kinds of statements may occasionally sound irreverent, while to one accustomed to a severely scientific method they may be perfectly natural. "When we read," says Hofmann,[3] "in Numbers xiii. 22, that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan, the accuracy of this historical notice depends upon whether the author was in a position to know it." Is it not so? Or are we to suppose that such a fact as the date of the building

[1] "Handkommentar zum A. T. Genesis," p. 10.
[2] Id. p. 326.
[3] Quoted by Köhler, "Berechtigung der Kritik," p. 39.

of this town, which has little obvious relation to the salvation of our immortal souls, was the subject of a special revelation from Almighty God?

All these points may be safely enough conceded, and yet it cannot be too strenuously maintained that the true Biblical critic must be not only temperate, but reverent. The only science which will help us much in a theme so lofty is the science which adds to its knowledge reverence. Reverence is as indispensable as knowledge and patience. It was One who knew that said of the Scriptures, "They testify of me." Those Scriptures were spoken by holy men of God, "borne on" by the Divine Spirit. They have been the daily bread of the Christian Church for centuries. Whether we regard their origin, their function, or their power in the past and present, they come to us weighted with a solemn and mysterious dignity; and while they must continue to be the object of the keenest investigation, they must be approached in the spirit of a little child. There is no quarrel between the spirit of reverence and the spirit of science. Reverence is even a scientific necessity. Its function is to keep in view not the mere documentary facts only, but also the faith and feeling of the Christian Church as emerging out of and related to those facts.

So solemn a trust as is committed to us in the Holy Scriptures does not need the defence of scurrility. Eduard Rupprecht defends his use of "unparliamentary" language against an American protest by remarking[1] that his critic had forgotten that there

[1] "Die Kritik nach ihrem Recht und Unrecht," p. 58. The Bishop of Durham, who contributes a preface to Sir Robert Anderson's "The

was an end to parliamentary language "when one was standing not in Parliament, but in hot combat with rebels against the absolute authority of Him who was in every word the true God and eternal life." There was a time when saintly men like Wesley and Toplady could stoop to the language of extravagant recrimination, but surely the day for that is past. Neither science nor religion has anything to gain by abuse. It is diametrically opposed to the temper of both, and only brings into disrepute the cause for which it is invoked. It is well to remember that there will probably always be on some questions a certain margin of difference between Biblical scholars, to whatever school they belong. For of the two elements which more or less determine every presentation of truth — fact and feeling — the facts, though the same for all, are often few and difficult to correlate, while the feeling will naturally vary more or less with every individual. Our only hope is in reverent and dispassionate discussion, animated by the faith that, as the Word of the Lord has already proved itself in history, so it will continue to abide for ever and ever. It has survived many perilous attacks, and many still more perilous defences, and it will go on conquering and to conquer; for it is true, and truth is eternal.

A reverent spirit will inspire the critic with a sense of perspective. He will have little to say about

Bible and Modern Criticism," nevertheless expressly dissociates himself from "passages which reflect upon the *animus* of some representatives of the New Criticism with a severity I cannot follow" (p. vi). Yet he allows that the "mere courtesies" of controversy "may not always be in place" (p. x).

errors, discrepancies, and inconsistencies; and even that little he will say with regret. He will say it only under the constraint of scientific necessity, and only because it has some light to shed on the progress or nature of revelation. The ideal of criticism has been admirably defined as "the free study of all facts."[1] Every word here is weighty. It is *study*, *i. e.* investigation, neither blind acceptance nor inconsiderate rejection. It is *free* study — study that is not bound by conventional or traditional belief, but that is willing to go wherever the facts lead. It is study of *facts*, not of theories or speculations about the facts; though doubtless, when the facts are marshalled and studied, the mind will feel the impulse to find the explanation which will best account for them. And, finally, it is study of *all* facts; that would include, in the case of Biblical study, psychological and spiritual facts — such as the call of the prophets — which are sometimes too lightly evaded; it would include also facts of tradition as well as facts of history. There is a mystery about all facts, and most of all about Biblical facts: this mystery, as soon as it is felt, begets reverence. Biblical criticism may therefore be defined as the free and reverent study of all the Biblical facts.

[1] Nash, "The History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament," p. 85.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFUSIONS OF CRITICISM

Of the many things which have tended to bring Higher Criticism into disrepute, not the least important has been the alleged existence of "extraordinary differences in the results at which they [*i. e.* the critics] arrive, while starting from and building on the same critical principles."[1] If the principles were sound, it is argued, the divergences between those who maintain them could not be so serious; and the whole movement is rejected because its representatives are not wholly agreed among themselves. Now, there are reasons for these divergences; but, before proceeding to discuss them, let us boldly face the facts and frankly admit that, in many not unimportant directions, there are wide differences among the critics — differences which, until one sees how naturally they arise, are perplexing and confusing, and seem, on a superficial view, to make against the critical position as a whole.

These divergences may be illustrated from every part of the Old Testament; for convenience, we shall

[1] Kennedy, "Old Testament Criticism and the Rights of the Unlearned," p. 24. Gladstone ("Impregnable Rock," ch. 5) complains that there is not the same "unanimity, continuity, and ascertained progress" in Old Testament studies that there is in the natural sciences.

adopt the division into (A) the historical books, (B) the prophetical books, (C) the others.

(A) There is little harmony among the critics as to the dates of the three leading documents (apart from Deuteronomy) into which the Hexateuch has been analyzed — the Jehovist, the Elohist, and the priestly document. There is indeed a very large preponderance of opinion to the effect that the body of the priestly code in its present form is exilic or post-exilic; but there are at least two distinguished scholars who have given the most careful consideration to all the available evidence, and who maintain that that document is pre-exilic. Again, so far from the dates of the Jehovist and the Elohist being absolutely fixed, there is some dispute even as to which is prior to the other. There is a growing conviction that the Jehovist is the earlier: this is the opinion of Kautzsch and of the two most recent commentators on Genesis, Gunkel and Mitchell; but the priority of the Elohist is maintained by McCurdy[1] and others. Roughly speaking,[2] both documents are assigned by most critical scholars to the eighth and ninth centuries B. C. Sellin, on the other hand, a very brilliant and able scholar, believes that the Jehovist belongs to the time of David, and the Elohist to the time of Solomon.[3]

Nor does the difference touch the dates only of the documents: it equally affects the dates of certain of the more important institutions. Of the Book of the

[1] "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," vol. iii. pp. 70–72.

[2] Statements that are so brief and summary are necessarily very rough.

[3] "Beiträge zur israelitischen und jüdischen Religionsgeschichte," vol. ii. pp. 13, 15. (David, about 1000 B. C.; Solomon, about 970.)

Covenant (Ex. xx. 22–xxiii. 33) Kautzsch is not willing to say much more than it probably arose on the soil of the Northern Kingdom.[1] Day, in his book on "The Social Life of the Hebrews,"[2] says that it cannot have been earlier than the eighth century; while Sellin is equally confident that it belongs to the premonarchic period.[3] The gravest divergences gather round the institution which is, in many ways, the most important of all, namely, the Decalogue. Budde[4] roundly affirms the "impossibility of the Mosaic origin of the Ten Commandments." Several scholars bring it down as late as Manasseh's reign in the seventh century.[5] Piepenbring[6] places it earlier, denying that it necessarily presupposes the preaching of the prophets of the eighth century; but he also maintains that "there is no serious basis in history" for the traditional ascription to Moses. Yet one of the latest utterances on the Decalogue by an exceptionally well-informed scholar[7] is a vindication of its Mosaic origin. Ottley, too, maintains that "the traditional view of the Decalogue is intrinsically credible."[8]

Within the last few years a great controversy has gathered round the post-exilic history in Ezra–

[1] "Abriss," p. 27. [2] p. 183.

[3] Beiträge, vol. ii. pp. 42, 43.

[4] "The Religion of Israel to the Exile," p. 32.

[5] "Perhaps to this period the Decalogue, which is so eloquently silent in regard to cultus, is to be assigned." Wellhausen, "Israel and Judah" (translation), p. 112.

[6] "Histoire du Peuple d'Israël," p. 200.

[7] Peters on "The Religion of Moses," in the "Journal of Biblical Literature," vol. xx. 1901, pt. 2.

[8] "History of the Hebrews," p. 296.

Nehemiah; certain scholars maintaining that there was no such general return of the exiles from Babylon about 537 B. C. as has been commonly supposed. Some of the exiles would no doubt take advantage of the permission granted by Cyrus to return to their own land, but, it is maintained, there was no large and popular movement. Again, the priority of Ezra to Nehemiah is being stubbornly contested; it is argued that when all the circumstances are taken into account, there is a probability so high as to amount to a practical certainty that Nehemiah preceded Ezra and prepared the way for him. This is one of the most difficult controversies in the field of Old Testament history, and nothing like unanimity has yet been reached.[1]

The divergence of critical opinion relative to the prose of the historical books of the Old Testament extends also to the sporadic poetry that is there found. The blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix.) assigned by some to the reign of Jeroboam II. in the eighth century is put back by Gunkel[2] to the reign of David or Solomon, who argues that no verse necessarily presupposes the divided monarchy, while the original form of the poem doubtless goes back to the days of the Judges. Or take the elegy of David over Saul and Jonathan, which has been hitherto regarded by practically every critic as an undoubted composition from the hand of David. Professor Lincke of Jena believes it to be a late poem

[1] An excellent résumé, in English, for the arguments of these more recent positions will be found in Kent's "History of the Jewish People," pp. 126–136, 195–204.

[2] "Genesis," p. 431.

belonging to Northern Israel.[1] The same critic also sees in the Song of Deborah, which has hitherto been almost unanimously regarded as one of the oldest poems, if not the very oldest, in the Bible, a masterpiece from the golden age of Ephraimitic poetry.

(B) Let us now briefly consider the prophetical literature. Here it might seem that the divergences could not be so numerous; for while almost all the historical books are anonymous, and the door for the investigation of questions of date and authorship is thus left open, the prophetical books have usually superscriptions which would seem more or less to settle all such questions. Naturally everything will depend upon whether a superscription is integral to the prophecy or not. If it is not, then the book itself must be interrogated for an answer to all such problems. And here both questions and answers are legion. The question, *e. g.*, "Is the Book of Amos post-exilic?" has been seriously raised in the "American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature,"[2] and answered in the affirmative. The position was at once denied in an able discussion in the pages of "Bibliotheca Sacra."[3] Again, the question of the exilic authorship of most of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. was till lately regarded as practically settled; and this position seemed so overwhelmingly convincing that it

[1] "Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie," October, 1901, p. 481 ff. (essay on "The Origin of Judaism").

[2] January, 1902.

[3] April, 1902. Though this is not strictly an instance of the clash of opinion within the critical school, it fairly illustrates the general point that the same data, examined in a scientific spirit by different minds, may lead to very different conclusions.

was accepted by a tolerably large number who count themselves conservatives on other questions. Within the last year, however, the whole question has again been raised by Rev. W. H. Cobb in the "Journal of Biblical Literature,"[1] and the traditional Isaianic authorship has been ably defended. The arguments were promptly attacked by König in the pages of the "Expository Times."[2]

Many questions of the highest importance raised by the prophetic literature receive the most diverse answers. One of the most interesting and pressing of those questions is the authenticity of the Messianic passages — using the word "Messianic" in the larger sense. Is the bright outlook that occasionally breaks across the sombre pages of an Amos or a Hosea really part of the vision and the message of those prophets, or is it an interpolation born of the yearnings of a later day? Obviously this would be a very important question in the discussion of the history of Israel's religion; and there are excellent scholars on both sides. An eminent scholar[3] in a monograph on

[1] Vol. xx., 1901, pt. 1. On "Integrating the Book of Isaiah."

[2] December, 1901. In reply, Cobb summarized his argument for the early date in the "Expository Times" of March, 1902. His chief points are as follows: (i) The prophecy is addressed to comfort the cities of Judah after the invasion of Sennacherib (ch. xxxvii.). (ii) The polemic against idolatry is intelligible in Hezekiah's time. (iii) The mixed conditions implied by chs. lvii., lxv., lxvi. are explained by divisions of parties in Northern Israel (2 Chr. xxx.) and the influx of foreign colonists (2 Kings xvii.). (iv) The reference to Cyrus in xlv. 1 is interpolated, and in xliv. 28 perhaps a gloss. The references to Babylon might apply to Sennacherib's campaign against Merodach Baladan, and the whole might have been several times edited. (v) Argument from style and diction proves little.

[3] Volz.

"Pre-exilic Jehovah-prophecy and the Messiah" regards practically[1] all the Messianic references in the pre-exilic prophets as interpolations. The extent to which interpolation is supposed to have affected the prophets may be seen by a glance through the translation in such a book as Nowack's "Commentary on the Minor Prophets," where the passages believed to be late are printed in italics.

Who is the suffering servant in the latter part of Isaiah? On this, one of the most fascinating of all Old Testament problems, opinion is very seriously divided. Some take the servant to be in every case a personification, and to have a collective reference to the nation or the worthy element in the nation. Others, while believing that this is true in the main, yet hold that the subject of the four poetical pieces, xlii. 1–4 or 7, xlix. 1–6, l. 4–9, and lii. 13–liii. 12, is an individual. Again, among those who believe that the reference is to an individual, many are the conjectures as to his identity. One scholar holds him to be a martyr scribe of the Maccabean age. Others regard him as some great unknown saint who seemed, like Jeremiah, to incarnate in his own person the sorrow of his generation. On this question Sellin was led to change an opinion he had carefully formed and skilfully defended. In his book on Zerubbabel he had argued that that prince was the servant; in his "History of the Origin of the Jewish Church after the Babylonian Exile" he still contends for a personal reference, but he now believes that the person is Jehoiachin.

[1] The Messianic idea, he holds, appears first in Ezekiel.

(C) Numerous problems are scattered over the remaining books of the Old Testament. In some ways, that of the Psalter is the most intricate. Many are familiar with Wellhausen's famous dictum that the question is not whether the Psalter contains any post-exilic psalms, but whether it contains any pre-exilic. In 1889, Professor Cheyne believed the whole Psalter, with the exception of Psalm xviii., to be post-exilic. Duhm[1] even goes so far as to say that no psalm, in his opinion, is demonstrably as early as the Persian period; most of the Psalter he would relegate to the third and second centuries, some of it even to the first; and yet Baethgen, though he admits[2] that the historical situations presupposed compel us to regard by far the larger half of the Psalter as post-exilic, can find it possible to believe that between thirty and forty psalms date from the time of the monarchy. So Kautzsch: "The present Psalter contains in all probability a tolerable number of pre-exilic songs or fragments."[3] The utmost variety of opinion is also entertained with regard to the so-called Maccabean psalms. While some would crowd the Maccabean period with psalms, Baethgen contents himself with saying[4] that the impossibility of Maccabean psalms

[1] "Die Psalmen," p. xix.

[2] "Die Psalmen," p. xxiv. The first Psalm affords striking illustration of the divergence of critical opinion. Duhm thinks that it probably belongs to the first century B C.; Baethgen sets it between 622 and 597 B. C.

[3] "Abriss," p. 127. Cf. Sanday, "Inspiration," p 251. "I cannot think that it has been at all proved that there was no psalmody in the first temple." This, too, is the main contention of Robertson's "Poetry and Religion of the Psalms."

[4] p. xxix.

cannot be proved, though he himself is ready to claim only four with certainty — 44, 74, 79, and 83 — and a few others with probability.

When we pass from the larger question of the Psalter to the examination of individual psalms, we are confronted by the same unsatisfactory divergence of opinion. If any psalm has been confidently assigned to a particular date, it is the forty-sixth Psalm. The words of Bredenkamp[1] express the general opinion that it was "without doubt a song of triumph sung after the defeat of Sennacherib." Gunkel, on the other hand, interprets the psalm eschatologically:[2] Zion is the ideal Zion of the latter days, and the stream which makes her glad is the stream of Paradise. Peters,[3] again, ingeniously refers at least the first two stanzas of the psalm (verses 2–7), together with Psalm xlii., to the temple at Dan in the north of Israel.

Again, take the twentieth Psalm, one of the "royal" psalms scattered throughout the Psalter. Who is the king? Is he an historical or an ideal figure? and if an historical figure, is he to be identified with Zerubbabel, as Sellin suggests,[4] or with Josiah, on the eve of his campaign against Pharaoh Necho, as McCurdy suggests,[5] or with some one else?

Again, take the thirty-third Psalm. Cheyne[6] regards this as probably Maccabean, while Baethgen, though he does not dogmatize in favor of a definite

[1] "Gesetz und Propheten," p. 144.

[2] "Genesis," pp. 32, 33; also "Biblical World," January, 1903, pp. 28–31.

[3] "The Old Testament and the New Scholarship," p. 173.

[4] "Serubbabel," p. 189.

[5] "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," vol. iii. p. 165.

[6] "Origin of the Psalter," p. 195.

historical situation, says that it is "at any rate pre-exilic." In other words, there is a difference of half a millennium between the dates assigned by two scholars whose general critical principles are, in the main, the same.

Or again, take the one hundred and twenty-first Psalm. It is regarded by some as a psalm of the exile,[1] the hills being those to which in imagination the Psalmist lifted up his eyes from the monotonous plains of Babylonia; and it is usually held that the so-called Psalms of Ascent, or Pilgrim Psalms, of which this is one, are as a whole a post-exilic collection. But an able argument has been advanced by Dean Walker[2] in favor of a pre-exilic date. The psalm, he argues, is possibly connected with the reformation of King Josiah. Neither the sun, nor the moon, whose high places Josiah had destroyed (2 Kings xxiii. 5), would in any way hurt those who faithfully clung to the worship of Jehovah. On either view, the discovery of an historic background adds considerable color and interest to the psalm.

The problems of the Psalter are by no means confined to chronological questions. Often they affect the interpretation of the contents. For example, there cannot be said to be any universal, though there may be a general, agreement in the interpretation of the references to sacrifice in Psalms xl., l., and li. Kautzsch regards these psalms as pre-exilic,[3] because psalms containing such an energetic protest against

[1] Cf. G. A. Smith, "Expositor's Bible," Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 14.
[2] "Journal of Biblical Literature," vol. xvii, 1898, pt. 2, pp. 205, 206.
[3] "Abriss," 127.

the necessity of sacrifice could hardly have found entrance into the temple hymnal, had their age not already invested them with something like canonical authority. Now only last year, in a careful discussion of "The Psalms and the Temple Service," [1] Professor Matthes of Amsterdam denies that the Psalms contain any such protest. The conservative wing of critical scholarship naturally takes this view of such psalms.[2]

The differences which characterize critical opinion on the Psalter, equally characterize it in other books. Toy, *e. g.*, regards 300 B. C. as the upper limit for the Book of Proverbs, the completion falling in the second century B. C.[3] Graf Baudissin, on the other hand, is quite confident that parts of the book go back to pre-exilic times.[4]

The date of the Book of Job has long been a bone of contention among the critics. It has been the fashion recently to regard the book as the product of the exile. Budde, however, puts the date provisionally about 400 B. C.,[5] and there is a growing tendency to regard the book as late rather than early. It is therefore all the more surprising to find a scholar who is in general sympathy with the principles of modern criticism giving expression to the following opinion, though he adopts the triple safeguard of parentheses, italics, and point of interrogation: "Job. *Circa*

[1] "Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft," 1902, pp. 65–82.

[2] Cf. Bredenkamp, "Gesetz und Propheten," pp. 59–63.

[3] "International Critical Commentary, Proverbs," pp. xix–xxxi.

[4] "Theologische Literaturzeitung," 1898, No. 7 (April 2).

[5] "Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, Hiob," p. xlv.

625 (?) (It is just *possible*, however, that it belongs to the Patriarchal Age)." [1]

Another interesting and not yet settled question is the age and authenticity of the prologue and epilogue to this book. If the book as a whole is post-exilic, are these of a piece with it, or are they older? Some scholars believe that both those sections come from a pre-exilic Book of Job. The younger Kautzsch, after an examination of the linguistic features and the religious conceptions of these sections (cf. angels, Satan) assigns them to a post-exilic date.[2]

There has long been a fierce controversy between the opposing schools with regard to the date and historicity of Daniel; but for a considerable time there has been little or no discord in the ranks of the critics themselves, among whom the accepted date of the book is about 168 or 167 B. C. There is an admirable and educative statement by Dr. Selbie of the reasons for this view in the "Critical Review" for March, 1902.[3] An interesting and useful discussion in support of the critical view of the book will be found in the fifteenth chapter of Peters' "Old Testament and the New Scholarship." But even this view, which had come to be regarded as an almost established fact, was recently challenged by Mr. Johnstone in the "Expository Times," [4] who urged against it some not unimportant considerations.

[1] Mackay, "The Churchman's Introduction to the Old Testament," p. 297.

[2] "Das sogenannte Volksbuch von Hiob."

[3] By a singular coincidence, a very elaborate defence of the traditional view from the pen of Principal Douglas appeared a month afterwards in "Presbyterian and Reformed Review" (April, 1902), 224 ff.

[4] May, 1902, p. 383. "Every scrap of evidence we possess, apart

These divergences, to which attention has just been called, do not by any means exhaust the actual divergences prevailing among the critics; nor are they perhaps even the most serious. One lays much stress upon tradition; another less, perhaps none. One believes Abraham to be an historical character; another asserts that such a belief argues lack of literary appreciation. One believes that the covenant at Sinai is a later idealization of the relation between Jehovah and His people; another believes in it as an historical fact. One believes that the history of Israel may be fairly said to start with Abraham; another, that we have no historical ground beneath our feet till we come to Moses; another, that David is the first character who stands in the full light of history; another, that some of the tales even about him are astral myths. One believes in the supernatural; another doubts or ignores it. One believes that the prophets were reformers who continued and developed the positive truth revealed to Moses; another, that they were really innovators — in the now famous phrase "the creators of ethical monotheism" — that it was they and not Moses who created the religion of Israel. Indeed, from some points of view this is the most fundamental problem of the Old Testament, — whether there is or is not a breach between the pre-prophetic and the prophetic religion.

It may be frankly confessed that these differences are bewildering enough, and that they do not create a *prima facie* probability for the validity of critical

from theories as to prophecy, points, and points strongly, to the conclusion that our Daniel must have been compiled before 300 B. C."

methods. It would be easy, however, to close the lips of the adversary by an *argumentum ad hominem*. It would be a simple matter to point out, as we have in part done, that the ranks of the opponents of criticism do not present a solid front any more than do the ranks of the critics themselves. One concedes the compositeness of Genesis as inevitable; another denies it as a ridiculous impossibility. One asserts that the Book of Chronicles is as reliable as the Book of Kings; another admits that its unsupported statements must be received with caution. One believes that the Book of Daniel is a transcript of historic fact; another finds it, in many essential respects, unhistorical. One believes that the Book of Ecclesiastes is the work of Solomon; another allows that, if that be so, there is no history of the Hebrew language. And so on. It would be easy to show that there is not much more real unanimity on the part of the opponents than of the supporters of the critical movement. If it be urged that these differences touch only minor points, that could be denied; for surely credibility is not a minor point.[1] But in any case the argument, as an argument, falls to the ground; for it is open to reply that the principles which produce such discrepancies cannot themselves be sound. Such an *argumentum*

[1] One must, of course, admit in fairness that the majority of the school would not go so far as Sayce in his view of Chronicles or Daniel. The Tract Committee of the S. P. C. K. make it quite clear in their preface that, in publishing Sayce's "Higher Criticism and the Monuments," they are not to be understood as committing the Society to all the opinions expressed in it. All the same, Sayce is often put forth as the protagonist of the opposing movement, and his word is regarded by the opponents of criticism as final in questions affecting the relation of archæology to criticism.

ad hominem would be easy, but it would not be worth while. It will be more profitable to try to account for the phenomenon observable among both parties of the controversy — that good and wise men even on the same side differ among themselves.

The explanation may lie in either or in both of two directions: either the principles are faulty, or the facts are few. Now, what the critical principles and methods are we shall have occasion hereafter to discuss and illustrate; meantime it may be enough to remark that one who objects to those principles or to any principles, assumes, for his own judgment, another standard; and this assumption he must be prepared to justify, on penalty of failing to convince his opponent. Every objection postulates an implicit, and very often unjustified — we do not say unjustifiable — criterion.

But what seems to be too often forgotten throughout the whole controversy is the comparative paucity of the data, our almost total absence of information about events and movements of the very highest importance. Is it not obvious that such extraordinary divergence of opinion in so many departments would be impossible, if the data were less meagre and ambiguous? What do we know, for example, of Jehonadab, the son of Rechab? He is accorded only a verse or two;[1] yet we know[2] that he represented a movement of great importance and some influence in the religion of Israel. What precisely did the guilds or "schools" — as they are not quite correctly called — of the prophets do or believe or teach? What do

[1] 2 Kings x. 15 ff. [2] Cf. Jer. xxxv.

we really know of the so-called "false" prophets, and where are we to look for a sympathetic treatment of them? What do we know, unless by inference, of the spiritual and intellectual life of the exiles in Babylonia? What do we know of the period of seventy years or so between the building of the second temple and the preaching of Malachi? In our historical records it is an almost absolute blank, though we know by inference that it must have been a time of tragic importance. These gaps in our knowledge are undeniable: how are we to fill them in? for the historical instinct, believing in the continuity of history, impels us to discover, where possible, the progress of events. Our sources are lamentably meagre, and we have to make the most of them. Is it any wonder that one man interprets an event or a movement in this way, and another in that? Doubtless it may be urged that his interpretation is controlled by an antecedent bias. That may be. Whose interpretation is not controlled by some bias?[1] But the point is that the paucity of the facts leaves it open to him to put his own interpretation upon them in perfect good faith. As a rule, the more numerous the facts, the more restricted will be their possible interpretation.

Contrast, for a moment, Hebrew literature with Greek, in point of bulk. Contrast the elaborate histories of Herodotus and Thucydides with the brief narratives in the Book of Kings, which often dismiss great reigns and important movements in a word or two, and not seldom leave their importance to be

[1] This point is discussed more fully in the chapter on "Criticism and the Supernatural," pp. 233—235.

inferred. Contrast the philosophical literature of Greece with the prophetical literature of the Hebrews, and add, if you like, the wisdom books. The influence of Amos or Hosea on Hebrew religious thought was doubtless as profound, or nearly so, as that of Plato on Greek speculation; yet the extant literary work of either of those prophets would only cover a fraction of a single book of the "Republic." And for obtaining an insight into contemporary feeling, what are we to compare with the criticisms of the witty Aristophanes, who lashes in turn contemporary literature, philosophy, and politics? It is surely obvious that the man who would sketch the history of the Hebrew people or their religion is at an enormous disadvantage. To say nothing of the inherent difficulty of the sources — a difficulty which the most superficial study cannot ignore [1] — the sources themselves are so meagre that the recorded facts are often fairly capable of more interpretations than one, and a use of conjecture, or of what has been called the historical imagination, is inevitable. What use the historian or critic will actually make of those things will depend upon many considerations — his temperament, his education, his philosophical standpoint, and so on; but it should not be ignored that it is the scantiness of his material that leads him to have recourse to those perilous helps, and that is, therefore, indirectly responsible for the divergences which all must deplore, but some of which will, in all probability, continue to remain.

[1] Cf. the two accounts of the origin of the kingdom in the Book of Samuel, or of David's first meeting with Saul.

This margin of inevitable uncertainty is often conceded by opponents of the critical school. Volck,[1] after an elaborate argument to prove that the picture of the religious development of Israel, "according to the hypothesis of the new school," is impossible, adds, "I am far from supposing that my discussion has succeeded in finally invalidating all the objections hitherto raised to the traditional conception of Old Testament history, in removing all the resulting difficulties, or in solving all the riddles." Bredenkamp,[2] too, after showing that there is a high probability that the law of the centralization of the worship was known in Hosea's time, admits that it cannot be absolutely proved, and adds that "often in the Old Testament we cannot attain more than probability." Dr. Green also admits that "a few puzzles remain insoluble by us."[3]

Every one who has ever tried carefully to concatenate the facts presented by the Old Testament is compelled to admit that there is a good deal about which it would not be safe to dogmatize; and many of the critics have expressed themselves with the most becoming reserve — though they have not always got credit for it — especially with regard to the more obscure and difficult detail. The most ardent advocate of the Documentary Hypothesis, says one of the most recent commentators on Genesis, "would hardly claim that it is absolutely perfect. He would doubtless admit that, at this distance from the period of the origin

[1] "Heilige Schrift und Kritik," p. 187.
[2] "Gesetz und Propheten," p. 157.
[3] Munhall, "Anti-Higher Criticism," p. 88.

of the Pentateuch, it is too much to expect to be able to unravel to the last thread the history of its compilation, and that therefore one must not be surprised if the accepted theory is not applicable without exceptions." [1] Again and again Gunkel emphasizes the hypothetical nature of some of his results, especially in the sphere of documentary analysis. In his analysis of the Paradise story [2] he requests that no one overlook the reserve with which his conjectures are advanced. He is not, he tells us elsewhere in his discussion of Gen. xli., "under the illusion of having attained certainty: on such difficult and complicated ground one must be satisfied to attain probability." [3] In a striking passage [4] he emphasizes the great difficulty of chronologically fixing spiritual processes, "We know ancient Israel too little to be able to speak with certainty." No doubt many of the critics have been unduly dogmatic, just as many of their opponents have been; but it would be unfair to over-

[1] Mitchell, "The World before Abraham," p. 68.

[2] "Genesis," p. 22; cf. p. 229.

[3] p. 393. This is the real answer to such a charge as that of Dr. John Smith ("The Integrity of Scripture," p. 119), that "the possession of virtual omniscience" is "calmly assumed in the literary analysis of the Old Testament." So far from that being the case, Driver (in common with most of the critics) believes that with the exception of the sections which belong to the priestly code, *the analysis* (from the nature of the criteria on which it depends) *is frequently uncertain, and will perhaps always continue so* (Introduction, xiv, xv). He therefore often assigns a section to the composite document known as J E, just because he does not feel able to assign it definitely to one or other of the constituent documents, J and E. So Kautzsch queries quite a number of verses in his analysis as doubtful. Cf. Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis," p. xxix, "There will always be a remainder which defies our analysis" (G. F. Moore)

[4] "Genesis," p. lxi.

look such direct and explicit testimony as has just been adduced, and could easily be multiplied tenfold. There are some, if not many, on both sides of the controversy, who, under the constraint of fact, would be willing to admit with Professor Terry that "some of the main points at issue are of such a nature as not now to admit of final settlement."[1] To the scholars who have been over all the ground nothing is so certain as that there is much that is uncertain. In his discussion of the date of Habakkuk, the late Professor Davidson remarks[2] "how precarious it is to draw inferences as to the date of a passage or a writing solely from the ideas which it contains. The literature is far too scanty to enable us to trace the course of religious thought and language with any such certainty as to fix the dates at which particular ideas or expressions arose."

The very divergences of the critics enable them to act as a constant check upon each other. Every important book receives the most minute and searching attention, either in subsequent books or in the great theological magazines, especially of Germany. No critic has it all his own way. His interpretations are subjected to the severest tests. One is regarded as too finical, another as too modern. One of the most recent commentators on Jeremiah criticises another for being capricious and fanciful.[3] A recent commentator on Chronicles is taken to task for his unnecessary emendations of the text.[4] Only last

[1] "Moses and the Prophets," p. 112.
[2] Cambridge Bible, "Nahum," etc., p. 62.
[3] "Theologische Literaturzeitung," 26 April, 1902.
[4] Id. 9 Nov. 1901.

year Professor König of Bonn published a little book entitled "The Most Recent Principles of Old Testament Criticism examined,"[1] in which he attacks, among other things, the undue emphasis laid by certain scholars on style and metre in the determination of text and authenticity, and vigorously combats the view taken by Stade, Gunkel, and others of the patriarchal stories. To this we shall return. Perhaps the best known scientific protest in English against the more radical school of criticism is Robertson's "Early Religion of Israel."

No great movement is ever wholly in vain. The truth that was in it is lifted up and carried on. As critic keeps watch upon critic, it is reasonable to expect an ever closer approximation to the truth. This expectation is all the more reasonable that we notice signs of what we might call a conservative reaction, if that phrase were not so much in danger of being misunderstood. By that we do not mean that any of the critics are returning to the belief that Moses wrote the whole of the Pentateuch or David half the Psalter; but that more respect is being paid to the testimony of the Bible to itself, with the result that the possibilities of pre-exilic and even pre-prophetic times are far more highly estimated than they have usually been by the hitherto dominant school of criticism. The conjecture which Professor Sanday made about ten years ago,[2] that "the criticism of the near future is likely to be more conservative in its tendency than it has been, or at least to do fuller justice to the positive

[1] "Neueste Prinzipien der alttestamentlichen Kritik geprüft."
[2] "Inspiration," p. xii.

data than it has done," though it seems to be belied by the general spirit and results of the "Encyclopædia Biblica," has, in the main, been corroborated. The work of Professor Sellin of Vienna can hardly fail to be without its influence.[1] Here again the recent commentary of Gunkel on "Genesis" is of the profoundest significance. The latest document in the Pentateuch, which it has been too much the fashion to regard as practically a work of the priestly imagination, he holds to rest, in part, upon a much older source, and to contain some very ancient material even in the historical portions, as in the Creation and Flood stories.[2] Again, the narratives in the earlier documents, many of which are commonly supposed to have arisen during the time of the monarchy, he believes to be in reality very much older.[3] In a highly interesting sentence he remarks: "After earlier ages had found every possible dogmatic and ethical subtlety in the Old Testament, modern investigators have often fallen into the habit of painting ancient Israel as crudely as possible; that will also have its day."[4] In particular he returns again and again[5] to his attack on what he calls the one-sided literary criticism, which considers the dates merely of words and authors and books, and forgets how long a history the material itself may have had before it received literary form. Here again the insight of Professor Sanday has been singularly justified. "It was natural," he said in his

[1] Cf. especially his "Beiträge," vol. i.

[2] pp. 101, 102. It has preserved, *e. g.*, some lines of ancient poetry. Cf. Gen. vii. 11; viii. 2.

[3] p. xi. [4] p. 235. [5] pp. 30, 75, 117, 139, 341.

"Bampton Lectures," [1] "that in pursuing a perfectly unfettered inquiry and correcting one by one the traditional dates of documents and institutions, there should be a tendency to lay too much stress on the first mention of either; with the result of either confusing that first mention with the real origin of the document or institution, or at least allowing far too little for growth and not sufficiently considering what the process of growth involves. This is a direction in which it would seem that the researches of the critical school will bear to be supplemented." And supplemented they are by the movement of which Gunkel is a singularly brilliant exponent. The following well-weighed words of his should be taken to heart by those who think that criticism is going from bad to worse: "The author cannot conceal his conviction that the present prevalent literary criticism has been too ready to declare as spurious the passages which do not fit into its construction of history, or which are unintelligible to the modern investigator, and that this period of criticism must necessarily be followed by a strong reaction." [2]

The errors and extravagances of criticism will be corrected in time by a criticism that is more alert and penetrating.[3] Theories whose inadequacy can be

[1] "Inspiration," p. 118.

[2] p. 113. Incidentally he affirms the authenticity of Is. xi. 6 ff., denied by Hackmann; of Is. xvii. 12–14, denied by Stade; of Is. xxx. 7 b, denied by Duhm; of Hos. ii. 18, denied by Volz; and he suggests a pre-exilic date for other passages which are commonly regarded as late; cf. Ps. cx.; Num. xxiv. 22, 24.

[3] Cf. Sanday, "Oracles of God," p. 79. "Theology is becoming far more international and interconfessional. . . . Men are comparing notes the whole world over, and extravagances and aberrations are

proved will be modified or rejected, and the fittest will survive. But to suppose that the whole critical movement is invalidated because the results of its various supporters are not unanimous is completely to mistake the comparative unanimity that prevails in many of the larger issues, and in the attitude to the critical or historical method as a whole. Two blacks do not make a white.[1] It is still the fashion to-day, as it was twenty years ago, "to deride the Higher Criticism as the mere product of individual caprice, or to exaggerate the discrepancies of its results, and to imagine that they can be got rid of, like positive and negative quantities in an equation, by setting one against the other. But it is a mistake to suppose that this process, however far it may be carried, necessarily makes for the traditional view of things, which stands or falls by itself, and must meet its own difficulties. And criticism is making its sure way from destruction to construction, from negative to positive results."[2] There is much that is still uncertain; there is much

being struck off on this side and on that. Before this great tribunal, eccentricities cannot stand."

[1] Literary criticism, which has to be clearly distinguished from spiritual interpretation, — a very different thing, — "is a perfectly legitimate science, with a profoundly important end in view; and ought no more to be discredited than any other science, by the fact that its various exponents are not all equally wise, nor always in mutual accord." Illingworth, "Personality Human and Divine," p. 182.

[2] "Hibbert Lectures" (1883), p. 352. The words of Steuernagel with regard to the analysis of the Hexateuch are worth taking to heart, and their application can be extended: "In by far the largest number of cases the judgment of specialists *in the main points* is unanimous; and for this, one may rightly demand the same recognition from the non-expert as he would willingly accord to the judgment of the historians of art" ("Allgemeine Einleitung" at the end of his Commentary on Deuteronomy and Joshua, p. 260).

that may never be certain: but there is a great deal more that is certain, and we shall conclude by briefly mentioning some of the positive results in which there is practical unanimity amid all variety of critical opinion. It may not be out of place to add that this unanimity, though it is usually denied by the opponents of the critical movement, and its absence made to count as one of the heaviest indictments against critical methods, is yet conceded by other opponents. Bishop Ellicott, *e. g.*, frankly acknowledges an agreement, remarkable and unexpected, between men whose principles differ widely, as between Delitzsch and Wellhausen, or Dillmann and Kuenen.[1]

What, then, are the things which are most surely believed by the critics?

(i) The compositeness of the Hexateuch, and, in a certain sense, of all the historical books.[2] There are, as we have seen, considerable differences in the dates to which critics assign the various documents; but that there are various documents is doubted by no one. This may be accepted as a practically irrefragable conclusion, as it is admitted, at least for the Book of Genesis, by many opponents of criticism. But further, there is not only a universal agreement as to the existence and the number of the documents in the

[1] "Christus Comprobator," p. 36.

[2] Fifty-five years apart, Ilgen (1798) and Hupfeld (1853), independently reached the conclusion that there were two documents which used the word *Elohim* for the Divine Being. Old Testament criticism is not the young or arbitrary science it is sometimes supposed to be. The lines of the documentary analysis were laid down one hundred and fifty years ago.

Hexateuch — the Jehovist, the Elohist, Deuteronomy, and the Priestly Code (J, E, D, and P) — but there is a harmony which is nothing less than astonishing in the assigning of the various chapters and verses to their respective documentary sources. Any one may speedily convince himself of this by a cursory examination of the conspectus in Holzinger's "Introduction to the Hexateuch," or, if he have only English books at his command, by comparing, in detail, the analysis in Driver's "Introduction" with that in Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis" or "Triple Tradition of the Exodus." The argument cannot be turned, as is often attempted, by saying that the critics swear by the dictum of one or two of their great leaders. In point of fact, the results are very often reached in absolute independence; and we speak from experience when we say that any one who has once entered sympathetically into the spirit and principles of the documentary analysis could — especially in Genesis — relegate, without much trouble, many sections to their documentary source, and in doing so would often find himself in agreement with the conclusions of the scholars.

(ii) Another result — strictly speaking, another aspect of the same — is the conclusion that there are in the Pentateuch three legal codes, belonging to different periods and representing different stages of religious development. These codes are the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22–xxiii. 33); Deuteronomy; and the Priestly Code, including Leviticus, together with the long and continuous sections of Exodus and Numbers which deal with the priestly legislation. The codes succeed each other almost certainly in

this order, and they reveal the growing predominance of priestly interests.

(iii) The Book of Deuteronomy is unanimously believed to be connected with the reformation of Josiah, as cause with effect; and it was written, if not in Josiah's reign — which we need not suppose — then certainly not very long before it, most probably in the reign of Manasseh. The question of the date of Deuteronomy is so fundamental as to be sometimes called the pivot of Old Testament criticism; and on this so fundamental question critical opinion is practically unanimous that the book comes from the seventh century B. C. — a conclusion reached about a hundred years ago.

(iv) Another result is the new appreciation of the enormous intellectual and spiritual significance of the exile. On the older view of the Bible, almost the only voice then raised was that of Ezekiel. Now we know that neither in his priestly nor in his prophetic activity did he stand alone. Other prophets (Is. xl.–lv.) lifted up their word of inspiration and consolation. Histories, ancient and more recent, were collected and edited, and the lessons taught by the exile were woven into them. The importance of the exile as a formative influence on Jewish thought, life, and literature it would be almost impossible to overestimate.

(v) The post-exilic period was a time of markedly predominant priestly interests. The "law," if not the product of Judaism, at least became law then in a sense in which it had never been before. The contrast between the prophet and the priest has no doubt

often been too absolutely drawn ;[1] but speaking very broadly, it would be fair to say that the pre-exilic period was the period of the prophet, while the post-exilic period was that of the priest. The history of Israel is certainly very much more than a ceaseless conflict between these two forces. Not seldom those forces were really working for the same ends ; and it was in large measure the priestly forms of Judaism that preserved the prophetic spirit against the perilous inroads of heathenism. Nevertheless the contrast has proved a very useful and fertile one.

(vi) Another result in which the critics are in complete harmony is that the closing of the canon took place at a much later date than was formerly supposed, and that some of the greatest books of the Old Testament — Jonah, *e.g.*, and Daniel, and many of the Psalms, to say nothing of books of the most profound human interest, like Ecclesiastes — were written at a period in which it used to be thought that no heavenly voice had spoken. The gain here is obvious. There are no four hundred years of silence, as indeed there could not be. The Old Testament revelation ran a long course : periods which before were blank are now seen to be crowded with interest, human and divine.

(vii) We have hitherto confined ourselves to details. One word may be said in conclusion about the general effect that criticism has had on the presentation of the history. Put briefly it is this : It has made it

[1] Principal Harper's "Constructive Studies in the Priestly Element in the Old Testament," which appeared in the "Biblical World" for 1901, and have since been published in book form, will go a long way toward correcting the one-sided view of the place of the priest.

abundantly clear that revelation was progressive. It did not begin by furnishing the people with highly elaborated laws, irrelevant to their situation ; nor did it end by leaving them four hundred years without a divine witness. It gave them what they needed and could understand. It taught them what they could bear. It had many things to say, but it was in no haste to say them; it said them here a little and there a little. It led them as a father leads his child. On the part of the great interpreters of God's will and purpose, the appreciation of truth grew. In the words of a French scholar : " God took men where they were, in order to lift them *progressively* to Himself." [1]

[1] Loisy, " Études Bibliques," p. 121.

CHAPTER IV

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM

We may regulate criticism : suppress it we cannot. It is one of the deepest necessities of our experience. Indeed without it we could have no experience; that is, no coherent, connected experience. Experience would be meaningless were the scattered facts which seem to constitute it, though by themselves they could never really constitute it, not lifted up into a unity, related to one another, and to the self that judges them. Criticism, in however technical a sense it may be applied, and however forbidding or regrettable some of its results in certain spheres have been imagined to be, always springs essentially from the impulse — an impulse which the man in the street shares with the professional critic — to relate the facts of our experience to one another. It is only another term for judging of the relations of things. A critic is a *kritēs*, or judge. Criticism is explicit judgment; and we are all critics, not perhaps formally, but none the less really, in the sense that all our opinions, those that are hasty no less than those that are mature, are judgments, at least informal and implicit. The very nature of our experience as human beings presupposes not only the right, but the necessity, of criticism.

Before proceeding to establish this point by an appeal to our current opinions about certain parts of the Bible, let us look for a moment at the origin of the word. Words are like men. In the course of their checkered history they often stray far enough from the sphere in which they first saw the light, and from the duty for which they were originally destined; but they usually retain to the last something of their original purpose and accent. A clear conception of what is involved in criticism, and of all that still constitutes its essential qualities, may be won by even a brief examination of the use of the word in the language from which it came. A critic is one who judges. The root idea of the Greek word, however, is simpler than this. *Krinō* originally means *to separate*, *e. g.*, one thing from another unlike it, as the good from the bad. Here in this simple illustration lies the germ of all that subsequently appears in the complex form of modern criticism. It implies a standard in virtue of which one thing is marked off, discriminated, from another; and also a deliberate judgment on the facts before us, determined by that standard. If the standard is at fault, the judgment will be at fault; but standard and judgment are alike involved in the simplest act of separation — discrimination. Further, from the idea of separation of one thing from another springs the idea of selecting from a whole; thus *krinō* can mean *to pick out, choose.* This, in its turn, gives rise to a further but perfectly natural development — *to decide,* in presence of a large array of facts or evidence, in favor of one fact or view rather than of another, and therefore the

word may be used in the sense of "deciding a contest or dispute." Here we have passed subtly from a predominantly material or sensuous sphere to one involving moral and intellectual considerations. The step from this meaning to the last of all is easy — to pass an intellectual judgment; *e.g.* "I give my judgment (*krinō*) that thou art the victor" (Æsch. Choeph. 903). This brings us, if not actually, at least practically, within the modern use of the word which suggests a more formal study of the material surveyed, but does not essentially involve any new principles. Even this modern and formal idea appears in later Greek in which the adjective *kritikos* could be used as practically equivalent to our word "critic," and also in the Latin, which rests on Greek (Cicero, Quintilian, Horace).[1] *Critical* is an epithet applied in Hebrews iv. 12 to "the word of God," which is said to be "critical" of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Having traced the word to its origin, and in its development, let us now proceed to show that criticism does not need to begin by substantiating its right to exist, but is involved, even in the most conservative opinions, as really, though not so explicitly, as in the most radical. We are all critics, and our opinions are all criticisms. The man who believes that the twenty-third Psalm was written by David is just as really a critic as the man who doubts or denies it; and assuming that each is equally honest in his belief, their divergent opinions are produced by the same impulse — their desire to see facts in their unity. The scholar who defends the Davidic authorship, even

[1] Cf. Liddell and Scott's Lexicon.

the man who believes in it without having ever consciously regarded the question as debatable, does so because he believes — in the one case, after examination of the question, in the other, instinctively — that there is nothing in the psalm inconsistent with the known or believed historical facts of David's life, with the trend of his character, or with the progress of divine revelation at his time. The psalm, he believes, can take its place within the unity constituted by those facts: *believes*, we say; that is his judgment, his *krisis* — deliberate, in the case of the professional critic; real, though not deliberate, but implicit, in the case of the ordinary Christian. The scholar who objects to the Davidic authorship does so because, so far as he can see, it cannot be related to the established, or presumably established, facts of the history. He may argue that its repose does not seem the natural reflection of the comparatively rude age in which David lived, or that it is too unlike the elegy to be from the same hand, or that the depth of its feeling and the quiet beauty of its trust is hardly what we should expect to meet till revelation had reached a more advanced stage, and is hard, if not impossible, to reconcile with the known religious facts and attainments of that early period. In many cases such an argument as this might be reinforced by considerations drawn from the literary style or the metrical form of the poem, though such arguments are notoriously precarious. We are not here expressing any opinion whatever as to the authorship, nor are we arguing that these reasons are adequate: we are merely pointing out that the plain man who believes

that the psalm was written by David is a critic, no less than the scholar whose conclusion he rejects and regrets, and that he believes what he believes for reasons which will compel him to concede the critic's right to differ from him, if he does so honestly. The plain man, let us suppose, has faced the facts of David's life and times as he understands them, and has concluded, at least informally, that these are not inconsistent with the claim of the psalm to be Davidic. He cannot, therefore, deny the critic's equal right to face the facts, and if he concede to the critic the honest exercise of his judgment — and he surely would not wish him to play it false — he cannot resent his conclusion; not, at least, on any principle which would not equally justify the critic in rejecting *his* conclusion.

Or take, again, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The plain man believes in it, let us assume: a critic doubts it. Which is right? That is a question for the most careful and impartial investigation. But in the meantime the point to notice is that they reach their different conclusions from identical principles. Both, let us presume, have enough of the historical sense to see that they must start from facts. The critic believes that the facts are flagrantly incompatible with the Mosaic authorship, even with single authorship: the plain man believes that they are not incompatible with it, and that, where they seem to be, the difficulty would be easily surmounted by one who believed in the almighty power of God, and that to feel such difficulties proves the littleness of faith. The critic asks how a single author could give differ-

ent and in some cases inconsistent accounts of what clearly appear to him to be the same incidents; how the style of an author could vary so much and yet so uniformly; how a man could give an account of his own death;[1] how names[2] and allusions to incidents[3] and institutions[4] later by many centuries than the presumed date of the authorship could appear in a work of so remote a time. "Impossible," says the critic. The plain man has his answer ready. The accounts which the critic holds to be contradictory are supplementary. They only need to be skilfully harmonized, and they are certainly capable of it — though sometimes, one feels, this cannot be done without much juggling, which does not reflect much credit on the clear-headedness or the literary skill of his author. And difficulties of every sort can be readily surmounted by the easy assumption that God can do anything, could reveal to a man the definite facts of the subsequent history of his people, or the manner of his own death.

There is room for grave doubt whether such a simple solution of difficulties and refusal to face them in the same spirit of candor as one would bring to bear in any other department of knowledge be really in the true interests of religion; but nothing is more certain than that it is not in the interests of science, and that

[1] With a curious inconsistency this point is not always pressed, though it is maintained with iron consistency by a few.

[2] *E. g.*, Dan. Cf. Gen. xiv. 14; Judges xviii. 29.

[3] *E. g.*, the Canaanite was then in the land (Gen. xii. 6).

[4] These are the kings that reign in the land of Edom *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel* (Gen. xxxvi. 31). There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 10). This verse obviously implies a succession of prophets.

it is not consistent with those principles by which our knowledge of the material world has advanced. But the point meantime is that the plain man's condemnation of the critic's conclusion is not consistent with the principles which he himself has adopted. He condemns the critic for failing to see the unity, the coherence, the compatibility in the facts which he sees or imagines he sees; he cannot therefore object to the critic's condemnation of his own unity as artificial and not natural, as superimposed on the facts, not revealed in and through them. The plain man makes his reason the ultimate judge: he judges, *krinei*, that his assumption of the authorship, supported it may be by tradition, is *possible*, *i. e.* does not clash with his view of the world. The critic finds that that assumption does collide with his view of it, and he therefore rejects it. The plain man might reply that if the critic had a truer, more adequate view of God and His power, he would see no difficulty. But the critic might reply that his view of God rests on revelation, no less than that of his opponent, and, he would probably add, does it more justice. But whatever be their respective views of God which appear to condition their conflicting opinions or conclusions, both are critics; both appeal to the logic of the situation; both see in their opinions a harmonious relation of facts.

Or again, take the question of the authorship of the last twenty-seven chapters of the book known as the prophecy of Isaiah. We shall tacitly assume that the plain man is satisfied that his opinion could justify itself at the bar of historical investigation, if only all

the facts were known. The critic points to a difference of style between the earlier and the later chapters: his opponent answers that an author's style may be notoriously uneven. The critic insists on the absolute incompatibility of the historical situations presupposed by the two sections of the prophecy: his opponent admits not indeed the incompatibility, but at least the difference; he defends himself, however, by assuming that the prophet of the earlier time was transported in fancy into the later by the Spirit of God. In other words, he is able to regard the complex and apparently contradictory facts or presuppositions as a unity. He can relate them, at least to his own satisfaction. He believes them, not on haphazard, but on principle — on the same principle as that on the basis of which the critic doubts them, namely, that that which claims to be believed must be believable. Thus the simple, artless belief of the ordinary uncritical person is an implicit criticism, which he could not only explicate, but, with a little skill and practice, defend, if compelled by the attacks of criticism to do so. It is no use, then, to object to criticism. Every belief is a criticism — implicit, if the belief be intuitive; explicit and formal, if the belief be reasoned.

It is hardly necessary further to emphasize this position that we are all critics, and that therefore no one can consistently object to criticism. But if further evidence were needed, practical corroboration of it might be found in our preference for certain parts of Scripture to certain others. In our daily reading, unless we adopt the practice of reading mechani-

cally through Scripture, we turn to some parts more naturally and readily than to others, with the result that certain parts of the Bible we know tolerably well — fortunately, usually the parts which it is best worth our while to know; certain other parts, without the knowledge of which we cannot intelligently enter into the full counsel and purpose of God as that purpose fulfilled itself in history, or understand the inner or outer, the spiritual or historical, conditions of Israel, the people whom He chose for a unique religious task — these parts we either do not know so well or do not know at all. Is not this choice of ours an implicit criticism to the effect that not even all Scripture, which is inspired of God, is equally profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, or instruction? Our unexpressed but practical preference reveals the latent critical instinct, which never is, and so long as our experience is intelligible never can be, in abeyance. This implicit criticism of the superior value for edification of certain parts of Scripture to certain others has received formal expression in a recommendation to be found in the Westminster "Directory for the Publick Worship of God." After the statement, "It is requisite that all the canonical books be read over in order, that the people may be better acquainted with the whole body of the Scriptures," occurs the passage, "We commend also the more frequent reading of such Scriptures as *he that readeth shall think best* for edification of his hearers, as the Book of Psalms, and such like." Here is conceded the right of criticism within the sphere of edification; but that right cannot be limited by this sphere. It

will and must assert itself within every sphere that is to be brought within the unity of human knowledge or experience.

The criticism which is latent in all informal belief becomes formally necessary (i) when the incident with which we are dealing conflicts with probability, or (ii) when it is represented by different sources in different ways. As an illustration of the former in profane literature, take Thucydides' critical estimate of the statements of Homer, which he regards as at least partly historical. In discussing the size of Agamemnon's armament, he takes occasion to comment on the characteristic tendency of Homer to exaggerate the greatness of the past. The numbers are too high; for poets in their songs "embellish and exaggerate,"[1] and for this reason he two or three times takes leave to doubt the value of the evidence furnished by the poetry of Homer. Here is the critical instinct of the later historian, trained in the philosophy of the schools, playing on the glow and warmth of the earlier poet.

The impulse to criticism, as we have said, at once begins to assert itself, as soon as an incident conflicts with our rightly or wrongly founded notions of probability. As a Biblical illustration, take the keenly discussed verses with which the Gospel of St. Mark closes. No critical student can read these verses without being struck by them, that is, without experiencing the impulse to criticise them — in other words, without asking himself how they are to be satisfactorily reconciled with the general scope of the Gos-

[1] Cf. i. 9; i. 10; i. 21.

pel. He will see traces of what will strike him at first as an undue emphasis on externals, and of what has been called "the incipient formalism of a later generation" — *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned* — which he may find it hard to reconcile with the well-supported tradition that the Gospel is early. If any one will take the trouble to read anything intelligently, that is, letting his mind go with it, he will find that he has simply been applying his mind to it in a critical spirit from first to last.

Further, we said that criticism becomes formally necessary when an incident is represented by different sources in different ways. Take, for example, the varying[1] accounts presented in Samuel and Chronicles, of David's relations with Araunah or Ornan. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 24 David pays him fifty shekels of silver; in 1 Chr. xxi. 25 he gives him six hundred shekels of gold. Such divergences are characteristic of Chronicles. Now it is not possible for us to accept both these statements as they stand. If we assume that they are both correct, then we have to exert ourselves in the usually rather profitless task of finding a higher harmony. But we may have reasons for believing that one of them represents the fact more truly than the other; and this position we shall have the less hesitation in adopting, if we can satisfactorily account, as we not seldom can, for the divergence. But one thing we cannot do: we cannot take both these statements into our mind, at the same time, as

[1] Reconciliations are offered by conservative scholars; cf. Sir Robert Anderson, "The Bible and Modern Criticism," p. 161.

they are. The nature of mind, the necessity for unifying our knowledge, will not allow us. To attempt to believe two statements which seem to conflict and whose divergence we cannot explain, would not be faith, but credulity. What are the attempts to harmonize the Gospels but a confession that the narratives, as we have them, present difficulties, which must somehow or other be met and surmounted, if possible? and what is this but criticism?

Thus Bible students, indeed all students, conservative and radical alike, may be divided into two classes: not those who receive truth on evidence and those who receive it on faith, not critics and non-critics — for, as we have tried to show, we are and must be all critics — but those whose criticism is capricious, illogical, unmethodical, and those whose criticism is scientific. We cannot dispense with criticism; it becomes us, therefore, to see that our criticism be of the right sort, regulated by the scientific spirit, not inspired by party spirit or supporting party ends, but animated by a sincere desire to know the truth, however strange and unwelcome that truth may be, and by the willingness to work and wait patiently for it.

At the outset it is well to take to heart the caution of the late Professor A. B. Davidson.[1] "The conclusions of criticism," he says, "attain to nothing more than a greater or less probability, though the probability may be such as entirely to satisfy the mind." Whether, indeed, conclusions will ever be attained so probable as to satisfy every mind, to convince those

[1] Quoted by Kirkpatrick, "Divine Library of the Old Testament," p. 8.

who are unwilling to be convinced, may well be doubted. Strong as the evidence is in several departments of Old Testament criticism, there are yet a few scholars, though the number is steadily decreasing, whom it has failed to convince.[1] But as probability, however high, can never be certainty, even though it may have the practical value of certainty, we must always, though sincere to our own convictions, be courteous and tender to the opinions of those who honestly profess that criticism has failed to convince them; for its conclusions, as Davidson says, can only be probable.

But if our conclusions are to attain their highest probability, then our method must be sound. This consideration leads us to the questions, What is the function of criticism? what are its conditions? what are the qualifications of the critic? The basal condition of all valuable criticism is that we know what our author said, not what careless copyists or later editors represented him as saying, nor what translations executed hundreds of years after the original, or even immediately after it, suggest that he said. This implies obviously, to begin with, not only an acquaintance, but an intimate and discriminating acquaintance, with the author's language. Without that, it will not indeed be impossible, but it will be hard, to apprehend

[1] *E. g.* Principal Cave: "May I add, with all modesty, and yet with all firmness, that all that has been written of serious importance upon these several points I think I know? And, knowing, I dare confidently to assert that the Development Theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch is non-proven" ("Battle of the Standpoints," p. 57). So, Dr. Behrends: "Professor Green appears to me to have fully answered President Harper" ("The Old Testament under Fire," p. 17).

the finer shades of his thought and feeling. He speaks to us in *his own* language, and we must learn it.

But we must know what it is that he says; in more technical language we must fix the text, and that is not nearly so easy a matter as it looks, or as the beauty, clearness, and continuity of the printed page would suggest. For most of us, what we find on the printed page will, of course, be practically final; and it always represents with more than tolerable adequacy the actual words that came from the author's pen. But it has to be remembered that the oldest Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament is not a thousand years old,[1] and therefore, roughly speaking, two thousand years distant from the oldest parts of the book which it claims to represent. What may not have happened to the text in the course of that time? In point of fact, we have good reason to believe that, for a very long time, nothing serious did happen to the Hebrew text; for a conservative instinct of unusual strength was in operation, helping to rally men round the Book, when they could no longer rally round the Temple. Still, the possibilities are there; and for the earlier period these possibilities become probabilities, nay certainties, as is attested by the different Hebrew readings that often lie behind the Septuagint or Greek text, and even by variant readings in the Hebrew text itself, and in the margin.[2]

[1] A Hebrew papyrus of twenty-four lines, however, containing the decalogue and the Shema' (Deut. vi. 4 f.), and supposed to date from the *second* century of the Christian era, has recently been found in Egypt.

[2] Cf., *e.g.*, the parallels in Ps. xviii. and 2 Sam. xxii. The "Qerî" and "Kethîbh" are enough to indicate that the original text was not held to be beyond dispute. Mistakes were also caused in manuscripts by the successive changes through which the Hebrew alphabet passed.

That being so, we must then have recourse to some other early witness for the text; and for this purpose we resort to translations,—ancient translations, of course, for modern translations prepared on the basis of the printed text, or of necessarily late manuscripts, can be at best no more reliable than the text on which they are based. In the case of the Old Testament, the translations with which we have chiefly to reckon in this connection are the Latin, the Syriac, the Aramaic translations or paraphrases, known as the Targums, and, above all, the Greek, which witnesses to a text of the third or second century B. C., but only imperfectly; for the literary and historical causes which contributed to the corruption of the Hebrew text contributed in different ways, and with possibly equal force, to the corruption of the translations. These translations would naturally in their turn be subject to revision on the basis of a later and presumably less reliable copy of the original text; and thus the distinctive features of the original translation would disappear in the forced conformity to the standard Hebrew. Even here the mischief does not end. Not only does the later form of the Hebrew text injuriously affect the independent witness of the earlier translations, but the translations affect one another. The Greek version early attained such a widespread recognition that it affected more or less seriously the Latin and Syriac translations.

How, then, are we to establish our text in the absence alike of a contemporary original, or even of a translation which reliably reflects it? It is no doubt possible to exaggerate the divergence of later manu-

scripts from the autographs, and of translations from the original;[1] but, after all, it is the task of scholarship to reconstruct the original text with the best aids at its command. And no one has any right to object to that as finical who rejoices in being able to read the Bible in his own tongue; for, had it not been for scholarship, that would have been impossible. The time has not yet come for a thorough reconstruction of the text. Knowledge of the ancient versions is steadily growing. But not till a highly probable text of the Greek, Latin, and Syriac translations is, we need not say discovered, but reconstructed, shall we be in a position to attempt a radical reconstruction of the Hebrew text.[2] First, then, we must find, if possible, the very words our author wrote, recognizing that this process is not an easy one, but demands a profound and extensive acquaintance with ancient languages, and no little skill in the marshalling of evidence and the gauging of probabilities.

Assuming, then, that we are at last in possession of the words, whether as the result of personal investi-

[1] "If comparative trivialities, such as changes of order, the insertion or omission of the article with proper names, and the like, are set aside, the words, in our opinion, still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole New Testament." Westcott and Hort's "New Testament in the Original Greek," p. 565.

[2] For a discussion of the question of the reconstruction of the text, cf. Kittel, "Ueber die Notwendigkeit und Möglichkeit einer neuen Ausgabe der hebräischen Bibel" H. A. Redpath, who justly claims "an unrivalled experience of what the Septuagint is capable of," thinks very highly not only of that version, but also of the *unpointed* Hebrew text. "American Journal of Theology," January, 1903, p. 13. The laws of Hebrew metre will also have to be better understood, before the text of the poetical books can be reconstructed with any confidence.

gation or whether we accept them on the testimony of others whom we believe to be competent experts, what will be our next step? It will be to discover what those words mean, in their isolation and in their connection. And this means much more than that we make a free use of the lexicon. We have no real knowledge of the meaning of the word *dikaiosunē*, for example, when we consult the lexicon, and find the correct, but lifeless, explanation: "Justice; in Septuagint and New Testament, righteousness." We wish to know what the word meant in earliest times, the simple conception which satisfied men whose moral perceptions were rudimentary; even its pre-moral conception, if it have one. We wish to see how the word deepened with the deepening experience and reflection of the Greek nation; what it gained, and how it changed, when it was transplanted from its native soil to the soil of ancient Hebrew. To understand that, we must know what *ṣedāqāh* meant; we must follow the word from its Semitic origin through its Old Testament developments into the New Testament, see how it was affected by the completed revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the Pauline formulation of that revelation. We do not strictly know what any word means till we similarly trace it on its way through the history, watching how it was formed by the conceptions of the people, and how in turn it helped to form those conceptions.

This process, in the case of such a language as Hebrew, is linguistic as well as historical; that is, it demands not only a deliberate relation of the word to its life in the minds of the people, but a reference to

the cognate languages, which are occasionally the only sources from which we may light up obscurities. Thus we need lexicon and concordance, knowledge of the history and of the cognate languages, and sympathy with the spirit which governed the historical development. This work is laborious, but fruitful. A little hard study at a few words of a verse in the spirit and in the manner which has been described will open the verse up, or lay it out, as the Germans say (*auslegen*) ; indeed our word *expound* means the very same thing. The verse remains closed to those who refuse to take any trouble of this kind. In this way we shall have a glimpse into its depth, though it does not follow that, because we see the bottom, we can reach it. We shall thus get into the heart of it, as we never can through even the best translation. We shall become *expositors* in the true sense, men who can lay Scripture out, disengage it from the form which protects, hides, and reveals it, show what *it* means, and that will be at bottom what God means — His purpose or message.

This, however, though indispensable, is not yet criticism. It is only the basis, yet the only basis, on which a sound criticism can be raised. True criticism must be sympathetic in spirit and constructive in aim. It is very important to emphasize the constructive aim of all true criticism at a time in which its aim must seem to many to be the very reverse. The object of all criticism is to put us in possession of an author's mind and spirit, to place us on his standpoint and enable us to survey the world with his eyes. The specific object of Biblical criticism is to put us in

possession of the mind and spirit of the men who wrote the Bible, to help us to understand the history in which they took part, and which they and their books helped to mould, and to make plain the divine purpose which unfolded itself in the history. Much criticism does not look like this. Much of it may even bear a close resemblance to destructive work, for it may have to clash with venerable opinions and prejudices. But this work, though not directly constructive, is indirectly so; for it is the clearing away of obstructions. All criticism should ultimately edify, build up. It should remember that it is not an end in itself, but should serve the end of elucidating revelation. The critic's work is to keep himself in the background, and to let his author speak for himself. When the critic's work stands between the reader and the text, he has failed. His task is just to leave us with the text with which he began, but purified, radiant, transfigured, not by shedding *his light* upon it, but by letting it shine *in its own light*. To do that, he must have a spirit in perfect, if only temporary, sympathy with the author whom he is expounding. No justice can be done to any author by a critic who fails to fulfil this initial condition; but the grossest injustice is done to the Biblical authors by such a critic, because their purpose is so earnest, and they speak the word of One that is higher than they.

Criticism is not fault-finding. It is construction, — not creative, but interpretative construction. It is judgment; and no true judgment is possible unless one springing from and instinct with sympathy. We do not mean that to interpret an author or artist fairly

you must believe what he believes. If that which he has constructed — be it statue, painting, or poem — be faulty in conception or expression, then part of the critic's task will be to point out the defect, and implicitly or even explicitly he may suggest lines for a remedy. But that is only part of the critic's task. The condition of success in the execution of this part is that he have so lived himself into the mind of his author that he sees why he made the mistake he made; why, from his standpoint, the mistake was natural; and how all that he does is justified from his point of view. Until we realize the naturalness of our author; until we almost feel that we in his place would have said exactly the same; until, that is, we have not only mastered his thoughts, but lived them over again, and felt the thrill with which they commended themselves to him as true — we are not in a position to interpret him on the inner side. We must first have a sympathetic appreciation of that which we would expound to others or even to ourselves; for we have not interpreted it even to ourselves unless and until we have entered into it in the way described. Professor Bradley used to say to his students in the University of Glasgow — and it is a very forcible expression of the idea we are here trying to emphasize — that, in reading Shakespeare (and we may extend the principle to all reading), what the characters say should seem to us "natural, and *almost inevitable*." We should feel that what they say is not only to be expected, but that they could not help saying what they said. Now nothing but the most minute and repeated study of an author, nothing but the most rigorous

exclusion from the mind of every disturbing subjective influence, nothing but a sympathy so thorough as to convert us for the time being into the author himself, can produce in us that feeling of the inevitableness of his work. These conditions can never indeed be perfectly attained, but it should be our endeavor to approximate to them; and when we have taken this trouble with any great author, we shall usually feel in the mood for appreciation rather than censure.

All that has been urged is true in general — of the necessity of a sympathetic knowledge of an author whom we would criticise justly; but it is doubly true in its application to the writers of the Bible. For these men, we believe, and have the most satisfactory reasons for believing, were the inspired vehicles of a revelation. The purpose with which they wrote was their own, and yet not their own. It was their own; for they did what they did and wrote what they wrote in the conscious possession of their powers. They were not machines, but living men. And yet the purpose was not their own: it was not they who spoke, but God who spoke in them. Nothing is more obvious than that the purpose which guided their work was only part of a higher purpose, which used them as its instruments at one time, but inspired no less their predecessors and successors. In other words, no prophet stands alone. He is beset behind and before, not only by God, but by a goodly company of other God-inspired men. He has his place in an historical development, which we may here more appropriately regard as a religious development. Thus, in our criticism of the Biblical writers, everything will depend

upon our attitude to the divine purpose, which reveals itself with most persuasive cogency in the history of Israel. If we care nothing for that purpose, then we are destitute of the very first qualification for forming a just judgment about men to whom righteousness was not only a passion, but the breath of their life. As well expect a person ignorant of Hebrew to read the Old Testament in the original, as one who cares nothing for righteousness to understand the passion that burned in the soul of an Amos.[1]

We must believe, then, in the purpose, in its power to adapt the natural world, and the passions, the tempers, the capacities, even the weaknesses of men, to the end of the kingdom of God. If we do not see this purpose, or do not believe in it, then we shall have to study each author by himself, to regard him as a product of nature; and he and his work will be an insoluble riddle, for naturalism will not explain Israel any more than it will explain Christ. Not till our heart beats in response to the message given him by his God will that message receive from us adequate interpretation and comment. In all our criticism the head and the heart must never be very far apart. Rightness of heart is not an absolute guarantee for rightness of judgment; but it is an indispensable condition. *Pectus facit theologum.*

We shall see what is meant by insisting on the necessity of sympathy as a fundamental condition of

[1] Cf. Thomas à Kempis, "De Imit." "From one Word are all things, and all things utter that one. . . . No man without that Word understandeth or judgeth rightly" (I. iii. 2). "Each part of the Scripture is to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was written" (I. v. 1).

all true criticism, if we consider any of the difficulties which present themselves in the words of Christ. Take, for example, the famous *logion* —

> Go not into the way of the Gentiles,
> And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

How would a shallow, unsympathetic criticism deal with such a statement? It would dispose of it summarily by pointing out that it directly contradicts the entire spirit and to some extent even the form of Christ's teaching, to say nothing of His conduct. Its singular want of catholicity points, it would be said, unmistakably to a Jewish source, which could see in Jesus nothing but a patriot, and in His work nothing but what was local and national.

A profounder criticism would set to work with more caution. It would, in the first place, be struck by the earnestness of the injunction, repeated in an altered form as if for special emphasis. It would be led by its apparent contradiction to the general tenor of Christ's teaching to assume its probable authenticity. It would remember that Christ must have a plan; that His work must begin somewhere; and in the face of the prevalent antipathy to the foreigner, that He would not be likely to prejudice His cause at the outset by a measure which could rouse nothing but opposition. It would feel that Christ would most naturally secure the catholic end He had in view, by inducing His followers to limit their earlier efforts to their own countrymen; the educative and expansive power of the message might be trusted to do the rest in time. But, above all, it would feel that this in-

junction of Christ practically implied that even His previous teaching had been characterized by an implicit universalism. When He said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," He must have been speaking to men who had already gathered from His teaching that it was their business to go beyond the borders of their own people. Nothing but the most delicate sympathy with the mind and method of Christ could keep us from going astray in our criticism of such a passage.

Again, take Matthew Arnold's general attitude to the revelation of the Old Testament. From his standpoint it would be no revelation, at least not a distinctive one. It would tell us nothing which we could not learn with equal truth and power from Greek tragedy. "The word 'righteousness' is the master-word of the Old Testament."[1] His statement is, in a sense, correct; but it means much more than Matthew Arnold means by it. He ignores the fact that the Hebrew word for "righteousness" is not seldom paralleled with the word for "grace"[2] and is often coupled with it. In failing to accentuate the grace rather than the righteousness, he has missed the distinctive feature of Old Testament revelation. He has shown with great impressiveness where Old Testament religion was like other ethical religions; he has not shown where it was unlike them. In the words of an English scholar, who adopts the juster view which supplements the truth on which Arnold insists: "The Bible is inspired because it is the record of

[1] "Literature and Dogma," ch. i. 2.

[2] See some striking facts in Hatch's "Essays in Biblical Greek," pp. 49–51.

the *chief* revelation of God to man. God revealed Himself in creation, in conscience, and in reason; so that those who have never known the Bible have had a revelation of Him. But He revealed Himself more fully as a God *of grace* to the Jewish nation, in the facts of their history and the teaching of their prophets; and most fully of all to the Christian Church in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ."[1] It is the fact that Scripture is the record of the revelation of grace, of a God who, though He loves righteousness and hates and punishes iniquity, yet delights in mercy, and deals not with men according to their sins, but loves to redeem — it is this that makes it greater than the greatest of all other revelations, and gives it its lonely pre-eminence as a factor in the moral education of the human race.

Our recognition of the superintendence of God will affect both our general and detailed criticism, but within no sphere so profoundly as in that of the miraculous. This question will be more fully discussed in Chapter IX., but a word or two here will not be inappropriate to our present purpose. If God is a free moral agent, and not only free, but gracious, longing for the redemption of His fallen children, it will not be surprising that He should adapt the order of nature to the interests of His kingdom. To a mind which believes in God as the God of order, but does not understand that the physical order is instinct with a moral purpose and subserves a moral end, it must be a great satisfaction to persuade itself that miracles do not happen. Such a dictum, how-

[1] Lock, "Oxford House Papers," series 1, p. 105.

ever, is more summary than convincing. Difficulties are not fairly met by so simple a solution. "Miracles do not happen: this is a miracle; therefore this did not happen." One who could persuade himself by so easy a syllogism would do well to re-examine his use of words, his conception of nature, and his interpretation of history. What is a miracle? Do we know enough of the principles on which the order of nature depends to justify us in affirming that any particular phenomenon is a breach of that order? Granting that we do, why should a breach be impossible, if breach there be? Is not this to shut God up within the walls of the world which His own fingers framed? To do the Bible justice, we need not only scientific method, but a Biblical conception of God. Or, to return to the point from which we set out, our heart must beat in sympathy with the purpose of God, as revealed to and through and in His servants the prophets, the psalmists, the legislators, the historians.

There is truth in Matthew Arnold's contention that "the language of the Bible is literary, not scientific, language;" but when he goes on to describe it as "language *thrown out* at an object of consciousness, not fully grasped, which inspired emotion,"[1] is he not doing less than justice to the formative power of the Spirit of God within the prophets? Their language was not merely thrown out: did not the "object of consciousness" which "inspired the emotion," also give definiteness and expression, as well as direction, to the emotion which it inspired? Did not God reveal His secret to His servants the prophets?

[1] "Literature and Dogma," ch. i. 4.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORICAL METHOD—LOSSES AND GAINS

The historical method has been called the gift of God to the present generation. That is true in the sense that there never was a time when that method was so fearlessly and consistently applied to all departments of Biblical study, or when the validity of the method itself was so universally admitted as today. But it is not true in the sense that the method was never known or used before. It is nature's own method. Its principles are too obvious and natural to have been wholly ignored in the past; for one of its fundamental postulates is that men meant what they said. The principles, however, which to us seem so obvious were for centuries obscured by ecclesiastical tradition and by the misguided exegetical ingenuity of both the Jewish and the Christian Church. But God seldom left Himself without a witness to the historical method. It was too patent and indispensable a principle of interpretation to escape the honest eyes of a Luther or a Theodore.

Nearly four centuries ago the method was incidentally defined by Luther in one of his commentaries in language which sounds as if it had been written yesterday. "To understand the prophets," he tells us, "it is most necessary to know what were the contem-

porary Jewish interests, what was the state of contemporary politics, . . . most of all, what was the form of contemporary religion," etc. More than a millennium before Luther's time the same principle was seen as clearly and applied as earnestly by that most remarkable and sharp-sighted exegete, Theodore of Mopsuestia.[1] It is amazing to find how, not only in the broad principles, but also in many of his results, he anticipated the findings of the most recent criticism. The 51st Psalm, for example, he interprets as referring to "the people in Babylon, confessing their sins, and entreating for forgiveness and the cessation of their banishment." The 65th Psalm, again ("Praise is meet for Thee, O God, in Zion"), he refers to "the people in Babylon, yearning for the return." The 127th Psalm ("Except Jehovah build the house") he interpreted as mirroring the interruptions to the building of the second temple after the return from Babylon.

So much for the Christian Church. But even the early Jewish Church had some insight into the principle that literature is not wholly intelligible unless in relation to the history of which it forms a part. The 127th Psalm, which Theodore rightly saw to be post-exilic, is referred by the early Jewish editors

[1] Naturally neither Luther nor Theodore used the method as strictly as we do to-day. Each was, as we should expect, in different ways conditioned by the intellectual influences of his time. For certain modifications of the above statement, as it affects Luther, cf. p. 184, note. Again, it was Theodore's mechanical view of prophecy operating in the Psalms that enabled him to represent David as speaking in the person of various individuals, and with reference to the later historical situations which the language of many of the Psalms seemed to him to imply.

(though not in the ordinary codices of the Septuagint or Greek version) to Solomon, and doubtless supposed to be connected with the building of the first temple. The fact that this conjecture is almost certainly wrong does not affect the argument. They felt that the lyric was born out of a given situation, and that only in relation to that situation is it in the strictest sense intelligible. Indeed, what are all the superscriptions in the Psalter but testimony to a certain historical sense, real, though often misguided, on the part of its early editors? Whether the superscriptions are right or wrong, whether the Psalms in the second book do or do not fit the various episodes in David's career to which the superscriptions assign them,[1] matters not for our present purpose. They are, at any rate, a testimony to that instinct for fact, which is so hard to slay, and an acknowledgment of the vital and illuminating significance of history. The lyric may wing its way skyward, but it rises from the ground. The more we know of the singer, of his home, of his church, of his sorrows, of his hopes, the more we shall be able to feel as he felt, and to live every tremor of his emotion over again.

It is in line with this that so much of the ground of the Bible is covered by history. In one sense it is all history, if not of event, at least of spiritual fact. But what we have to notice is that more than half the Old Testament and more than half the New is confessedly

[1] See Dr. MacLaren's expositions in his "Life of David as reflected in his Psalms;" also "The Psalms of David and the Higher Criticism," by Rev. Alexander Wright.

history, in the ordinary sense of the word. Consider the significance of this. This would not be so if our religion were a mystical religion. Emotion, inner experience, would be enough. But to the Christian religion facts are indispensable. The Christian emotions can only be created and sustained by the Christian facts. The nature of God was revealed from age to age largely through historic fact. Jehovah *did* great things for His people, whereof they were glad. And the present arrangemeut and composition of our Bibles is an everlasting testimony to the importance of historic fact, and to the impossibility of believing — in the Christian sense of that word — without relation to the facts through which the revelation came. The house of faith must be built upon the rock of fact. From the earliest times, then, history has been in some measure respected, and felt to be in some sense indispensable to religion; and even in ages when allegorical interpretation held the field, there were witnesses, though for the most part very few and feeble, to the historical method — scholars whose efforts were slowly bringing the world back to truth, the truth as it is in history.

The historical method is presupposed in most modern interpretations of Biblical literature, but it is seldom that one meets with a definition of that method. This is unfortunate, because the attempt to define its essence would give us a profounder insight into its fairness and inevitableness, and would probably convince us that what we need is not less of that method, but more. Now perhaps the historical method might be most simply defined as follows: it is the method

which implies that *every literary production is also an historical phenomenon*, and a corollary of this is that its message, if it have one, is primarily relative to its original historical environment. The literary product — be it poem, or prayer, or biography, or history, or letter, or theological discussion — does not come from *anywhere:* it comes from *somewhere.* It is a literary fact, but it is no less an historical fact. It has an historical context: it is related to other facts and to the mind of the man who made it an historical fact. Till we know something of the man and something of the other facts, we cannot pretend fully to know this fact; and, if we know something of the man and of the other facts, then we can, not indeed fully, but at any rate partially, explain this fact. Thus the historical method, by emphasizing the necessity for examining the mind and the time out of which a literary product came, has done something, though it cannot do everything, to account for that phenomenon.

Now both in the ancient and the modern world this method has had its enemies. Obvious as it now seems to be, it has had to fight for its life. The allegorists would none of it. The plain sense often seemed too paltry to be divine. "The letter killeth," it was argued, "but the Spirit giveth life." At a certain stage in the development of Biblical interpretation, it is true that the allegorical method served a useful purpose; but the gain was dearly bought. The relevance of a Biblical message to its original situation was forgotten. A subtler and worthier sense was sought which completely evaporated the concrete historical facts, in which the true sense lay, and, in the

nature of the case, must lie. Interpretation was abandoned to caprice; and what should have been a science became an absurdity and a confusion. Naturally all the books of the Bible suffered; some, however, more than others. Such a book as the Song of Songs offered boundless scope to the caprice of the allegorist or the mystic, who contrived to avoid the obvious meaning with a cunning which was almost as incredible as it was ingenious. In the Song the two rows of teeth were transformed into priests and Levites, King Solomon's chariot of the wood of Lebanon becomes the chariot of the humanity which the Son of God made for Himself; while "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee," is adduced to support the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.

This type of exegesis is dying, and will probably soon be dead; but there is another type, not uncommon today, which tends to depreciate the importance of historical considerations, by emphasizing what is called the timeless element in the Bible. Such psalms, it is contended, as the 23d, 103d, 121st, 145th, are intelligible to the plain man on the face of them. The fool cannot err therein: they speak home to his heart. That is only half true. It would be a simple matter to show that in these and in all such cases the gain derived from a more intimate knowledge of Oriental life, history, and religion is very great, has a direct influence even on our religious appreciation of the psalm and enhances its power to move us. The 23d Psalm reveals its deepest secret only to the man who knows something of the laws of Arab hospitality.

Even in so universally applicable a lyric as the 103d Psalm there are distinctively Hebrew notes struck, which have no music for the uninitiated. Who has not at times felt the remoteness of the verse, "He made known his ways unto Moses"? Yet, to one who knows the allusion, it is one of the most powerful verses in the psalm. It is not of course maintained that there is no timeless element in the Psalms, but that that element is so inextricably woven together with elements of time, that we must learn all we can about the one before we can have any adequate idea of the other; and this is still more true of prophecy. In other words, whatever plea may be made for the timeless element, the fact remains that every literary production is an historical phenomenon, and was written *primarily* not for us. The stones at Gilgal were to be a memorial *unto the children of Israel* forever. The timeless is for us, but we have to extricate it from the temporal, in which it came to them.

THE LOSSES OF CRITICISM

Every great movement, be it social, intellectual, or spiritual, costs; and the price has often to be paid in sorrow and tears. It was so when Christ came. It was so at the Reformation. It is so to-day. It is with deep pain that men see their long-cherished beliefs challenged, especially when those beliefs gather round the things which are dearest to their hearts; and even when, after prayerful and continued study, they may see themselves constrained to alter or modify their conceptions, they usually do so only with

much pain and after many a struggle. The way of transition is hard; and the leaders of religious and theological thought who have embraced the new movement cannot deal too tenderly with those whose intellects or consciences have been perplexed. It is quite certain that the gains of the critical movement have not been unaccompanied by loss — in some directions, by serious loss.

But it has to be noted (a) that the loss is in all probability only temporary, and such as is inevitable in the transition period. The feeling of insecurity, for example, in moving about Scripture, which the first acquaintance with criticism almost inevitably brings, gradually disappears as its methods are better understood. (b) The loss is itself often only a gain in disguise, or at least is preparatory to a gain. The loss, for example, of the sense of the external authority of Scripture is a gain, if it leads to a sense of its inherent authority. The latter could not be shaken by any amount of criticism. (c) It is not so much the actual results of criticism that produce the loss — for we see good men in all the churches who believe in those results, and yet suffer no loss — rather it is the imperfect apprehension or the misunderstanding of those results. No doubt this does not apply to the weightier opponents of the critical movement, but it does seem to apply to the rank and file, whose opportunities for informing themselves at first hand are more limited. Partial and ill-informed opinions about the results of criticism, as some one has lately said, cannot but produce evil results of a formidable kind in the near future. If this be

true — and it will hardly be denied — it becomes the duty of every one who cares for the welfare of the Church to see that no crude, offensive, or purely hypothetical presentation of the facts be placed before those who need all the positive and helpful truth they can get. It becomes us also to examine what those losses are which have to be deplored in order that, if possible, they may be counteracted by a wise, sane, and edifying presentation of assured truth.

(i) First may be mentioned the general unsettlement that has been produced by the vague knowledge that a process is going on in the religious world, which is not likely to leave things as they were. There is a large number in every community whose hold upon moral truth is never very firm. They believe the Bible to be in some sense, if not the only, at any rate the ultimate, sanction of morality; and if its authority is depreciated, the authority of morality itself suffers in the depreciation. A single proved discrepancy — say, Jehovah moving David in one book to number the people, and Satan moving him in another — would, to certain minds, raise a doubt — which some would harbor willingly, others with misgiving and pain — of the authority and divinity of Scripture. This, it is sad to confess, is one of the indirect, but tragically real, results of the critical movement. If Scripture forfeits its authority over us, some would argue, the morality which depends upon it is also powerless to bind us, and we are free. Not only lax thinking, but loose living, may and do easily result from the vague notion that criticism has attacked, refuted, and destroyed the Bible.

This is a real situation, and has to be met somehow. It would be necessary to point out, to one who thus reasoned, the assumptions and superficialities of this too easy logic. What gives him the right, for example, to demand that the Bible, as a divine book, shall contain no discrepancy? That is his demand upon the book, but the book nowhere makes that claim for itself. Again, what gives him the right to magnify the importance of some slight and relatively unimportant discrepancy? He will have to learn not only the purpose, but the perspective, of the Bible. For the maintenance of his relation to God certain facts are of the highest importance, certain others are *for this purpose* of little or no importance. Again, does he in his heart of hearts really believe that the difficulty which has confronted him, or even many difficulties of the same kind, really invalidate the elements in the book which appeal to his heart and conscience? or is the wish the father to the thought? Mr. Gladstone spoke truly when he said that negation was as much moral as intellectual; and though many are undoubtedly perplexed by the difficulties of Scripture, the heart is not where it should be when those difficulties are urged as a reason for repudiating its authoritative truth. Further, such a person as we are considering would have to be reminded, or taught, as the case might be, that, though the sanctions of morality are enormously reinforced by the teaching of the Bible, they were not created by that teaching. They lie deep down in the nature of man and in the constitution of human society. There was a morality before there was a Bible; those who are without law

do by nature the things of the law. The conscience of man is God's witness; and no flimsy repudiation of a book can deliver him from that insistent sense of moral obligation which he carries about him wherever he goes, until he wantonly destroys it. Such an answer might be given to such a man; but the fact remains that his attitude is encouraged, though far from justified, by the seemingly unsettling tendencies of contemporary criticism; and this is surely both a danger and a loss.

(ii) But there is another loss, which seems to be involved in the critical movement; and this time we are thinking, not of the man who is eager to cast off all authority, but of the man who is willing to cling to as much of Scripture as he honestly can. He would not say that there is no Bible left; but he would say that the Bible which is left is not the Bible which he once had. If all that the critics say is true, not only can he no longer appeal to his favorite proof texts in theological argument with the old confidence — that might be no great matter — but he finds it not so easy as it once was to sustain his devotional life upon it. He reads all the time with an uneasy consciousness that much of this has been questioned, and in certain sections where he is more familiar with the discussions, or at least the problems, the religious truth is blurred by the memory of the suspicions or difficulties created by those discussions. There can be no doubt that this is a very grave and serious peril, and tends, though it need no more than tend, to affect the devotional life alike of the critic and of the man who is versed in the problems only at second hand.

A popular preacher who is abreast of the critical movement tells us that he keeps two Bibles in common use: one for purposes of the study, filled with annotations and references that issue from his critical work; and the other destitute of annotation or reference or any such thing — this he uses for purposes of devotion. Of course no man has two minds. Every man is bound to carry with him into his devotions the mind which he brings from his study; but he need not carry the critical temper. In the hour of devotion he approaches his Bible, not to examine, but to meet with God and learn of Him. Criticism necessarily concerns itself largely with the letter, whereas it is the spirit that giveth life. Further, it is occasionally inclined to exaggerate the importance of questions, for example, of date, authorship, etc., which, from the strictly religious standpoint, are quite subordinate. The true perspective of the Bible, which has been temporarily disturbed by the minutiæ of criticism, is restored in the calm of the devotional hour; and though a man cannot create two minds for himself by using two Bibles, still, if by this device or by any other he is able to keep away the atmosphere of storm and stress from the hours, all too few, of his strictly devotional life, he is bound, by all that he owes his higher nature, to do so.

(iii) The increased difficulty, whether real or imaginary, of using the Bible as a devotional book has often been supposed to bring with it a decay in evangelical fervor, and to lead to a declining interest in the evangelization of the world. Now it is true that these effects have been observed in some of those who be-

lieve in the newer movement; but it is equally true that they have been conspicuously absent in others. And this raises the question, how far these effects are due to the movement itself, and how far to the idiosyncrasies of individuals or to their imperfect apprehension of the spirit of the movement. Just as rich, warm piety is not the possession of every nominal adherent of the common view, so neither does it characterize every nominal adherent of the critical view; but that no more invalidates the one position than it does the other. It is notoriously true that young men who had even shown an active interest in church life and work, sometimes become, at least temporarily, indifferent when they first came under the influence of another presentation of religious truth. But that only proves what a dangerous thing a little knowledge is, and with what a high sense of responsibility those who address such an audience, whether by writing or speech, should use their opportunities. Nothing is easier for a young man than to carry away a mistaken impression of a view of truth differing from that in which he has been trained, and which seems to appeal to certain iconoclastic tendencies that lie deep in youth. Some will welcome it because it is new; others will fear it for the same reason. Both will probably misunderstand it. The welcome and the fear will be alike superficial.

Two words of counsel will here perhaps not be out of place. (a) The young man must be warned against the temptation to estimate the spirit of the movement, from the first impression it makes upon him. If he thinks that it emancipates him from intellectual con-

vention, he must learn that it does not emancipate him from from spiritual law. If he thinks that it is destructive, and therefore welcomes it with a thrill of relief, let him wait till he sees how constructive it is before he attempts to estimate it. If he feels that it is disintegrating his spiritual life, or diminishing his religious activities, then he may be sure that he has misunderstood it; and he also needs seriously to examine his moral and spiritual condition, to see whether his affections are really set upon the things that are honorable and eternal.[1]

(b) Again, the preacher has to remember that while he may create for his hearers a new intellectual atmosphere, it is of infinitely more importance that he inspire them with a sense of the imperial authority of moral and spiritual obligation. Atmosphere is a subtle thing, and will come rather from suggestion than discussion. In the public interpretation and exposition of the Bible, protests against existing views are usually[2] offensive, and seldom edifying. It is an

[1] Some good remarks on the topic of authority will be found in G. A. Coe's "Religion of a Mature Mind," pp. 75–82, 94–107.

[2] Of course, no universal law can be laid down on such a matter. Something will depend on the local situation. While it is true that the pulpit does not exist for the discussion of criticism, it is the preacher's duty, with the help of the Spirit, to lead men into the truth; and incidentally this may, on occasion, involve a reference to, or even discussion of, contemporary influences, which are disturbing the minds or perplexing the faith of his audience. To deal with these successfully, however, a preacher has to qualify himself by hard work so that he may thoroughly, and on its inner side, understand the thing he seeks to expound; and again, he has to remember that his work is not done when he has presented literary or historical conclusions. He must show how these contribute to positive religious truth, and he must emphasize this truth with the earnestness of a man who loves the souls of men. The young man and his difficulties are not the only objects

offence, as well as an impropriety, to speak of "Second Isaiah," or formally to question the authorship of a psalm ascribed to David, before a mixed congregation assembled to worship God and to listen to words of eternal life. To whatever historical stage of the revelation the psalm or the prophecy belongs, it has a positive religious message. It had at first, and it has now; and that is the only thing of real importance to the Church. Doubtless the message will gain in clearness, power, and living interest and relevance when seen against its original historic background. The more history the preacher knows, the more historical imagination he possesses, the more he can make the ancient world live again, and compel his hearers to be, for the moment, "citizens of the past," the better it will be both for his message and his people. But he can do all this without going out of his way to insult conventional belief. Men may forget the sermon, but they will not forget the shock given them by his incidental remark. And the shock may lead to danger as well as pain; it may shake for some the authority of the Bible. Without any offensive reference to a Second Isaiah, which, besides having little meaning, edifies no one, and provokes and confuses many, he may quietly assume the exile as his standpoint if he is preaching from the latter part of Isaiah, and if he believes that prophecy to be exilic. The people will feel the relevance, the power, the marvel of his message

to consider. Old men and little children have also their place and their rights within the church; and the sight of them should sober the wise preacher into a proper perspective of his truth. But much teaching which would not be appropriate in church, might be possible in the Bible class, where the audience is more homogeneous.

— message of hope in an environment of despair; and thus, little by little, their intellectual atmosphere will be transformed. Scarcely knowing how or why, they will come to feel that prophecy kept pace with history, that God never mocked His people with an irrelevant word, but always sent His message to suit their changing needs.[1]

With these reservations, then, it may be conceded that some, especially some young men, have suffered through the critical movement, whether through an unwise and thoughtless presentation of it, or through their own imperfect apprehension of it. But, if facts prove anything, it may be easily shown that, so far from criticism involving the decay of the spiritual life, it is compatible with the noblest evangelical earnestness. In the mouth of many distinguished witnesses this thing could be established. Robertson Smith confessed his faith in these memorable words:[2] "The supreme truths which speak to every believing heart, the way of salvation which is the same in all ages, the clear voice of God's love so tender and personal and simple that a child can understand it — these are things which must abide with us and prove themselves mighty from age to age apart from all scientific study." Still more explicit is the testimony of Professor George Adam Smith. "From the bottom of my heart I believe in the Bible as the revelation of God to sinful man. . . . The history of the divine

[1] A rare illustration of the expository method which offends none and edifies all will be found in Professor Jordans' "Prophetic Ideas and Ideals;" for his treatment of this part of Isaiah, cf. pp. 223–273.

[2] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 20.

passion, predicted in the prophets, and fulfilled in Jesus, is what gives the Scriptures their perennial and their divine value. . . . They and they alone of all books that had ever appeared in the world, told the story of this warfaring and suffering life of God, that in heaven above, from all eternity, and in the person of Jesus Christ, and amidst our temptations, bore our sicknesses, carried our sorrows, and at last, as St. Peter said, in His own body bore our sins upon the tree." [1] From America the testimony is the same. "I have given ten years," says Dr. Batten,[2] "to the study of the Old Testament; I have read many critical works; I have investigated many problems myself; I may have earned the — to many — odious title of higher critic, but I have never yet seen any reason to doubt that in the many voices which are heard throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, all the way from Genesis to Malachi, it was possible to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit; or, I should rather say, it was impossible not to hear it." Professor Karl Budde, now of Marburg, one of the greatest Old Testament scholars of Germany, remarked in a letter to Professor G. A. Smith that his belief in "a genuine revelation of God in the Old Testament remains rockfast." [3] Now it may be difficult for the opponents of criticism to believe this, or to understand how the seemingly bold methods of criticism, to say nothing of its results, can be reconciled with a humble faith in it as a divine

[1] At the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland on 23d May, 1902 (Glasgow).

[2] "The Old Testament and the Modern Point of View," p. 315.

[3] G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament," p. 115, note 1.

revelation; but we must surely take such men at their word. Faith and criticism are in their experiences reconciled, and this is enough to satisfy our argument that they are not irreconcilable.

A recent writer in "The Outlook"[1] spoke of a certain cooling towards foreign missions as one of the results of criticism, though, as he admitted, only a temporary result. Certainly there is nothing in the results of criticism, properly understood, to damp a man's ardor for the great cause of foreign missions. When the Old Testament religion came to a true understanding of itself, it felt the uncontrollable impulse to become a missionary religion, a light to lighten the Gentiles.[2] And the impulse that governed the better spirit of Old Testament times from the exile on, the impulse that thrills in the Book of Jonah, is bound evermore to animate all who understand the inherent authority of truth, and the solemn obligation imposed by the possession of it. A Dutch scholar remarks that he has observed, both in his own experience and in that of others, that with a greater knowledge of the Old Testament a greater love for missions went hand in hand;[3] and one of the most interesting and encouraging features of the great Student Volunteer Convention held last year (1902) in Toronto was the presence and enthusiasm of many who are actively identified with the critical movement.

(iv) Criticism has also affected the dogmatic use of the Bible, and this has come as a loss to many. It regards the Bible as a record of history, not as a

[1] March 15, 1902. [2] Cf. Ps. lxvii.
[3] Valeton, "Vergängliches und Ewiges im Alten Testament," p. 8.

compendium of dogma, and its truths as originally relevant to a particular historical environment. In the words of Loisy, "One does not even conceive as possible a book written by men and for men which contains the truth, all truth, under a form appropriate to the needs of all time." And elsewhere, "a book absolutely true for all time is no more possible than a square triangle. . . . The divine word addressed to particular men in particular conditions, was spoken for them: in its form, it is true relatively to them, though it is absolutely true in its substance." Of course in the Bible, as everywhere else, form and substance are inextricably intertwined, and are capable only of an ideal separation. But if the form be ancient and Oriental, must not this be taken into account in finding the legitimate dogmatic application of a text? The old simplicity and definiteness seem to be gone. The old appeal to proof texts loses its confidence; for, strictly speaking, the text is not there to *prove* anything, though it may suggest the deepest and vastest things: it is the literary record of some historical, psychological, or spiritual fact. It may be harder to build theological systems out of such a Bible, but it will be easier to hold fellowship with the men who wrote it, and through them, with the God who inspired it. The historical method helps us to stand where they stood. We can think their thoughts over again. We can almost feel their breath upon our faces — so near are they. And in being near these men, with their thrilling interpretation of life and history, and with their profound religious experiences, we are near to God; for they

were His messengers. Thus, if the search for doctrine has been complicated by criticism, we may yet find living fellowship with living men of God and with the living God himself; and is not this a great thing?

THE GAINS OF CRITICISM

Let us now look at some of the gains.

(i) The historical method, speaking broadly, eliminates the possibility of arbitrary, or at least unreasonable, interpretation. If writers did not mean what they said, but something else, how shall we determine that other thing? No church or individual can determine it for us. The moment any such claim is made, we have a right to demand a guarantee that the proposed interpretation is correct; and no guarantee could be offered which would not involve a further assumption. If the historical method be rejected, to what method shall we go? We are then at the mercy of the allegorists, the mystics, the philosophers. Every man is free to interpret Scripture according to his fancy, or at least according to his theology. There is a grimly humorous illustration of this temper in Patrick Walker's "Life of John Semple." "After the unhappy Restoration and establishing of Prelacy," he tells us, Semple's "zeal was so great and flaming against bishops and their underlings, that wherever he was, and whoever were his hearers, great or small, he could never read and explain any portion of Scripture but he found bishops and their underlings, and somewhat in it against them; even in the beginning of the Genesis, the ac-

count of the whole creation, but not one word that God created bishops (as such), and from that he inferred they were none of God's creatures."[1] If the historical method be repudiated or unknown, Scripture may be made by its interpreters to mean anything; and though the possibility of arbitrary interpretation is not absolutely eliminated by that method, it is enormously reduced, and the perils of allegory are avoided.

(ii) The historical method has rescued for us not a few books of the Bible. The interpretation of the Song of Songs is not yet settled, but on any of the modern interpretations the book possesses an intense fascination, has a very powerful moral application, and would appeal to a large circle of readers whom the allegorical interpretation would not touch. And what shall we say of the minor prophets? Were they not as voices crying in the wilderness, till that wilderness was repeopled for us by modern scholarship, and we heard the prophetic message with the ears on which it once fell?

(iii) Again, the critical movement has given very great impetus to the study of the Bible. Never has so much strenuous and enthusiastic study been devoted to it before. The facts are coming to be better known. The history of the Bible is being examined in its relation to contemporary world-history. Its prophecy is being understood as a living message to the prophet's own day. The line between facts and theories is being more firmly drawn. The wonder

[1] "Six Saints of the Covenant." Edited by D. Hay Fleming (1901), vol. i. pp. 198, 199.

of Israel's story — unique on any interpretation — is impressing itself more and more upon the attentive mind. This direct and earnest contact with the words, the men, and the movements of Scripture can only result in good.

The literary interest of the Bible becomes more absorbing, when it is seen to be an ancient literature, with an extraordinarily varied, yet singularly harmonious, interpretation of life, man, history, God — a literature in which, for many hundreds of years, some of the finest spirits of the race have expressed their noblest thoughts with almost unparalleled beauty and power. But more absorbing than its literary interest is its intensely human interest. The temptation of the older method of study was to neglect the humanity of the Bible. The neglect was not unnatural, nor was its origin unworthy; it arose from its eagerness to know the mind of the Spirit. But it tended to forget that that mind was only to be known through the minds of the men whom the Spirit had chosen. And when the book lost its humanity, it largely lost its interest as well. Men are not all interested in theology; but most men are interested in men. It is the great merit of criticism that it has revealed to us again the interesting and varied humanity of the Bible.

Nor has it done that at the expense of its divinity; but it has shown us that in the Bible, as in Christ, divinity and humanity meet. It has taught us to find in the Bible a God who is not afar off. The thing most to be dreaded in Biblical study is what some one has not unaptly called vivisection — the attempt

to cleave the living harmony between God and man. The ultra-theological and the ultra-literary types of student are both exposed to this temptation. The one will see in it nothing but God, the other nothing but man. The one robs the book of its interest, the other of its glory. The truth demands their union. The God who dwells in the heavens is also a God who tabernacles among men. The divine truth has a human mediation, and the recovery of the humanity of the Bible is not the least of the fruits of modern criticism.

While it has heightened the interest of the Bible, it has also brought with it a fresh sense of reality and truth. It puts us in immediate contact with fact. It plants our feet upon the firm ground of history. We can all but see the footprints of God as He moves across the centuries. We can watch His purpose develop. We can see how His chosen instruments grew in their apprehension of that purpose; and the sense of security which comes from the knowledge that we have the solid ground of historic fact beneath our feet, deepens when we remember that these facts have been repeatedly tested by the keenest of critical processes.

(iv) The historical method presents us with a reasonable, probable, and even thrilling view of the development of Israel's history and religion. The various books reflect the various ages, and we can watch the life that is in them expand. Literary and spiritual influences are shown to have been at work in unsuspected times and places. Men were writing history in an age that we thought dumb. Prophets

were raised up to utter their words of lofty hope at a time when we thought that prophecy was dead. The historical method has peopled what once we thought were the waste places of history with witnesses for God. It is not altogether fair to say that that method has thrust a theory of evolution into its interpretation of the facts. Rather the unbiassed interpretation of the acknowledged literary and historical facts has revealed an evolution in the religion, as in the history. But of this more hereafter.

(v) The historical method has relieved the double strain of (a) moral and (b) intellectual difficulty. In one sense, the apologetic of the Bible is easier to-day than it ever was before.

(a) Not many years ago, distinguished theologians thought it necessary to defend Israel's wars of extermination.[1] Few would feel called upon to do so to-day. We now know that this was one of the practices which Israel shared with the Semitic peoples. Further, our view of revelation as coming through an historical development forbids us to believe that the morals and practices of the twelfth century B. C. must necessarily commend themselves to consciences which have enjoyed centuries of Christian culture.

(b) Intellectual. Faith is not believing the incredible. It is not doing violence to the intellect which God has given us for the apprehension of truth. It is often opposed to sight, but never to reason; and many of the difficulties and discrepancies due to the literary methods of the ancient East are to be recognized as inseparable from the human element in the Bible, and

[1] Cf. Mozley, "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages," Lecture iv.

are not to be driven home as articles of faith at the point of the sword. We cannot believe that Jehoshaphat both did and did not remove the high places.[1] We cannot believe both that the children of Korah perished and did not perish in the divine chastisement that overtook the rebels.[2] With the best intention in the world we cannot hold these things together in our mind at the same time: they constitute for us a mental impossibility. Nor need we believe them; for they are no indispensable part of the revelation of God. Neither, however, ought we to magnify them or the difficulty created by them. We shall recognize, in the case of discrepancies, that we have two versions of the same story, deviating perhaps in trivial detail, but agreeing in the main issue. Such discrepancies only show how faithful the final editors were to their sources. They took the discrepant statements, and often let them stand side by side, though in many cases a touch here and there would have reconciled them. But they did not allow the often obvious discrepancy to trouble them; why should we?

Now many of the sceptical attacks on the Bible, such as those with which the crowds in many of our city parks are regaled on Sunday afternoon, centre round just such difficulties as these — the dimensions and contents of Noah's ark, the delinquencies of David

[1] 2 Chr. xvii. 6; xx. 33.

[2] Num. xvi. 32; xxvi. 11. An illustration of the flimsy apologetic which tries to defend such things, recently came under my notice. A gentleman maintained that by the phrase *the sons of Korah* in the last passage, only the little children were meant! Of course, it really means the Korahites, just as the phrase *the children of Israel*, where the same word is used, means Israelites.

"the man after God's own heart," and so on. The apologete will still have to answer the science and the philosophy of his time, and it would be foolish to underestimate the difficulty of the defence. But attacks of the kind referred to are only valid against an obsolescent conception of revelation; they have no power at all against the modern view of the Bible. All such objections may be met by emphasizing the revelation as, on the one hand, ethical or religious, and, on the other hand, historical and progressive. To the revelation conceived under the former aspect, any objection based, for example, on the contents of Noah's ark or the age of the antediluvians becomes an irrelevant triviality; while to the revelation conceived under the latter aspect, the imperfections of David need offer no stumbling-block. David lived a millennium before Christ. Besides, his sin, so far from being commended or ignored, was the object of a searching prophetic rebuke, and left a trail of sorrow over all his life.

(vi) Another gain is this, that the discrepancies, etc., which have perplexed many and given occasion to the adversary to blaspheme, may be turned to real apologetic account. One of the greatest objections to the critical position, urged by many, though, as we have seen, not by all, has been the documentary analysis of the Pentateuch. But, if that analysis be justified — and this is one of the most certain results of criticism — then we are not only delivered from the necessity of believing that the same man was guilty of inconsistencies so strange as sometimes meet us within the limits of a couple of verses, but

we have further several witnesses to a story where we formerly supposed we had only one. Almost all the important incidents in early Hebrew history are attested by three sources — the two prophetic documents (J and E) and the priestly (P). Even if the evidence of the priestly document is weakened by the fact that it is late — though there is good reason to believe that in some cases, at least, it rests on ancient sources independent of the two older prophetic documents — it is still a powerful witness to the tenacity of the popular belief, and reinforces the twofold testimony of the older sources. Now, it is never a scientific thing to disregard the testimony of a people to its own past; but it becomes precarious, not to say absurd, when the leading incidents of that past are supported by a twofold, a threefold, and, in certain cases, even a fourfold[1] historical tradition. We have in the Hexateuch, when the critical analysis has discovered and reconstituted the documents, so far as it can, precisely the same phenomenon as we have in the Gospels — a fourfold witness to the epoch-making facts on which the subsequent history, in the one case of the Jewish, in the other of the Christian, Church was founded, and to which later ages made their constant appeal. Indeed, though this is the important point of the comparison, the parallel extends still further. In each case, one of the sources is later than the other three, and approaches its task in a somewhat different spirit; in each case, too, the other sources show similar resemblances, differences, and, generally

[1] If we include the Deuteronomist, as, for certain facts, we may.

speaking, mutual relationships.[1] So far, then, is the documentary theory from reducing the history to an absurdity, that it has confirmed it in its most important particulars.

(vii) Again, many an extravagance in belief and conduct would never have been heard of had the Bible been interpreted by the historical method. That great moral and intellectual offence which we know as Mormonism, no doubt finds one of its chief supports in the corruption that is in the world through lust; but, so far as it is based upon an appeal to the Bible, it derives its strength from a false and unhistorical view of revelation. It is no use for twentieth century men to appeal to the polygamous practices of the patriarchs. The Bible represents many stages of moral illumination, and it is no less than a religious crime to appeal to the earliest as of equal validity with the latest. The whole trend of prophetic thought and example,[2] to say nothing of Christ's teaching and its implications, is in the direction of monogamy.

(viii) This, again, suggests that the appeal to the Bible must always be made with exceeding care. Many who would repudiate its so-called testimony to polygamy would accept its so-called testimony to war. The warlike spirit has always found one of its strongest supports in the Old Testament. But the appeal is not so easy as it looks. It is, indeed, easy to show that Jehovah was a man of war, a God of

[1] The Jehovist and the Elohist might, for example, for certain purposes, be compared with Luke and Matthew, and the Priestly Document with John.

[2] Cf. Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel.

battles, and that His people loved and all but glorified war. But it is only fair to note that most of the poetry and history instinct with the martial spirit is very early, and that men of the true prophetic spirit yearned for a time when swords would be broken and the art of war forgotten. The application of the historical method, therefore, imposes a great and noble obligation on the modern religious consciousness. The illustrations already adduced prove the exceeding difficulty, if not futility, of an appeal to single texts. Questions can no longer be decided by such texts, for one text may be qualified, even contradicted, by another. The appeal must rather be to the spirit which brooded over the whole development of the revelation, but which is greater than any single text, greater even than all of them put together. Thus every new problem in the moral life demands from us originality. Its solution is not to be found in any single text; for that text is related to a situation which is not ours. Still, through the particular message comes a message from the Eternal; only it has to be disentangled by us from all that makes it particular, and read in the larger light of that vast and orderly revelation, whose perfect word was Christ. Thus the historical method ushers those who use it into the spiritual world. It delivers them from bondage to the letter. It compels them to face every fresh moral and intellectual problem with courage and originality.

(ix) In conclusion, it may be urged that the historical method furnishes the simplest and strongest defence against the attacks of scepticism. This has already been dealt with in part under paragraph v;

the point may here be amplified. The arguments which have so often been urged in the supposed interests of Biblical doctrine, the explanations occasionally offered of particular texts and passages, are frequently so far-fetched and improbable that they carry little conviction to an ordinarily fair and unprejudiced mind, and none whatever to a mind accustomed to the severe methods of exact science.[1] Not that Biblical truth can be reduced to a mathematical demonstration: far from it. But arguments and explanations which would not pass muster in other departments of investigation are seriously urged as if the fact of their being Biblical exempted them from the ordinary laws of logic, and from the natural challenge of the thinking mind. Of course we are not here alluding to the spiritual mysteries of the Bible, which must be spiritually discerned; nor are we forgetting the indefeasible necessity of religious instincts and sympathies, in a word, of faith, if there is to be any true or even approximately adequate interpretation of Scripture: we are speaking merely of certain common intellectual presentations of Biblical truth.

Now, truth is a unity. There are not two compartments in the human mind: one for the reception of theological, another for the reception of scientific, truth. And the man who begins to think for himself

[1] Much of the often ironical polemic of Huxley in his "Science and Hebrew Tradition" was undoubtedly just as against contemporary apologetic. Cf. especially VI. on "The Lights of the Church and the Light of Science." Christian apologetic is learning to adjust itself more to facts. See the articles on "The Need of a New Apologetic" in the "Biblical World" for the current year.

will sooner or later come to feel this. He may for a time contrive to hold them apart, until some incident in his intellectual career, or it may be his general intellectual development, leads him to see that there can be no ultimate disharmony in truth; and then the middle wall of partition breaks down. If Biblical truth has been presented in an illogical or unscientific way, if improbable arguments and unconvincing interpretations have been urged upon him, on pain of being considered a reprobate, or — as a prominent American Bible teacher lately put it — the possessor of a "sin-warped intellect," is it any wonder that, when the time comes, it is the Biblical, and not the scientific, truth that he parts with? No doubt to part with the Biblical truth for such a reason is an unscientific thing to do. A man of really scientific training should know how to distinguish essence from accident, and the substance of truth from imperfect and even illogical presentations of it. Still, it is not unnatural for such a man as we are considering, especially if he be a young man, to conclude that the truth which stands in need of so unconvincing a defence can never be truth for him; and, to his own immeasurable loss, he rejects it. Now, the historical method would not offer him such a defence, and so it would deprive him of such an excuse for his scepticism.

As an illustration of the forced interpretations which have not seldom alienated honest and open minds from the Bible may be cited the case of a candidate for the teaching profession in Germany. On being asked to give a specimen lesson on Genesis i., when he reached the verse, "God said, Let us make

man in our image," he paraphrased thus, "Then spake God to the Lord Jesus," etc. When the inspector asked him where he got this interpretation, he answered that it had been taught him in the seminary; adding that, when he was teaching a class of older children, he had been instructed to say, "Then the first person of the Trinity spoke to the second," etc.[1] There can be no doubt that exegesis of this type goes to swell the ranks of the sceptics. When the child that is drilled in notions of this kind becomes a student and puts away childish things, he will in all probability put away those childish interpretations too. The pathos of it is that he is likely to put away with them all reverence for the book which, had it been wisely and intelligently taught, might have been a light to his feet and a lamp to his path.

Some recent words of Rev. Dr. Selbie should be taken to heart by every teacher of the young: "Above all, we must be on our guard against seeking to save the reputation of Scripture, where we imagine that to be necessary, by methods we should hesitate to adopt elsewhere;" and "pause, whenever we are tempted to resort to special pleading, or to strain the evidence in order to avoid conclusions that are unwelcome."[2] Doubtless one of many reasons for the well-known indifference of large numbers of University students to religion and the Church is the sense of unreality and improbability in the customary presentation of Biblical truth with which, whether from education or associa-

[1] See Kautzsch, "Bibelwissenschaft und Religionsunterricht," p. 7, note 1.

[2] "Critical Review," March, 1902, pp. 99, 100.

tion, they are most familiar. It is truly a strange phenomenon to find numbers of men earnestly bent on the search for truth ignoring or rejecting the profoundest book in the world. But if they had been taught in earlier days to read the Bible for the truth that was there, not for the truth that might be thrust into it; to read it for the inspiration rather than for the doctrine it contained; to read it as a book of religion, not as an encyclopædia of all human knowledge; to find God in it rather than to learn how the world was made and how denominational prejudices might be vindicated, — how different it might have been when they entered the liberal atmosphere of the University! They would have had much to learn but nothing to unlearn, and there would have been no great gulf fixed between their present and their past, for both would have been inspired by reason as well as by faith.[1]

It is pathetic, too, to find that many of the great literary and scientific opponents of Christianity know next to nothing of the modern historical interpretation of the Bible. Just as the ordinary Christian, under the influence of a mistaken view of revelation, is apt to confuse essence with accident, eternal substance with temporary form, and to elevate trivialities into points of faith, so in many cases the scientific opponents of the faith, with far less excuse, do the same. In a way that is often crude as well as unjust, they take the popular presentation of the Bible and ignore the scientific. They combat positions which the scientific scholars of the Bible have given up decades ago. It

[1] Cf. Plato, "Republic," iii. 401, 402.

is notorious that some of the most violent and popular attacks have been made by men who, however great in science[1] and literature, have shown the most lamentable ignorance of the attitude and results of modern Biblical scholarship. These deplorable attacks are undoubtedly injurious, and often justly give rise to the gravest apprehension, especially when they are attractively delivered in the presence of young men whose beliefs are in the formative stage. Such attacks are to be deprecated as much in the name of science as of religion, for they are as unworthy of the one as of the other. But it is to be noted that they are powerless as against the modern historical interpretation of the Bible; and the more that interpretation underlies the teaching of the young, the more certain are those attacks to die a natural death.

[1] Haeckel's presentations of Biblical truth have been justly resented by Biblical scholars. Cf. Zange, "Unwissenheit und Unglaube," p. 16; Kautzsch, "Bibelwissenschaft und Religionsunterricht," p. 19.

CHAPTER VI

THE METHODS OF CRITICISM

It is often claimed that the problems with which criticism deals must not be left exclusively to the experts. The demand is a perfectly just one, and the great critics do not resent it. Robertson Smith's lectures on "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," epoch-making as they were for the English-speaking world, were delivered in the faith that the case for criticism could be appreciated by any man of education and intelligence. To master the intricacies of the case is, of course, the work of years; but, if the problems are real, and not imaginary, their burden should be felt by every man who reads his Bible with the attention which it deserves; and, if its main arguments are reasonable, they should be capable of being stated in such a way as to commend themselves to the man who brings to their appreciation ordinary intelligence and openness to conviction. It will be the object of this chapter to illustrate the critical methods by a few examples. We shall then be in a position to judge whether the problems are real and the methods reasonable.

Illustrations of the critical method will be drawn from its operations within the sphere of history, prophecy, and the Psalter. Firstly, from history.

I

One of the stones of stumbling has been the alleged compositeness of the historical books. The possibility of such a phenomenon has often been roundly denied; and, even where it is conceded, it is maintained that it is nothing short of absurd to attempt to delimit the sections and verses which belong to the constituent documents. Who, it is argued, would presume to separate Beaumont from Fletcher, or Besant from Rice? and, if this cannot be done in a tongue with which we are familiar, how much more impossible, not to say preposterous, in the case of an ancient and comparatively unfamiliar tongue?

Now there can be no doubt at all about the possibility of such a composite work as the Hexateuch is by the critics believed to be. There is an exact parallel in the "Diatessaron" of Tatian, a sort of harmony of the four Gospels.[1] This composite book constituted the official gospel of the Syrian Church for about two centuries, and but for the intervention of certain Syrian bishops might have actually displaced the Gospels in their separate form. The composite Hexateuch would correspond to the composite Diatessaron, and the documents out of which our present Hexateuch is believed by criticism to be constituted would correspond to the four Gospels. We need not waste words, then, discussing whether a composite book be possible, when we know it to be a

[1] An English translation of the Arabic version, with introduction and notes by Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill, B.D., is published by T. & T. Clark (Edinburgh).

fact. In arguing, however, from modern analogies to the impossibility of discovering the constituent documents, some important considerations are apt to be overlooked. It must be remembered that the two prophetic documents known as the Jehovist and the Elohist are not contemporary in the sense in which Beaumont and Fletcher, or Besant and Rice, are; and the priestly document is three or four hundred years from either. In other words, these authors are not collaborating, as the modern authors do;[1] they are traversing practically the same ground more or less independently. True, one document often records incidents ignored by the others; but in many cases the same incident is recorded by two and sometimes by three documents; so that, for those who admit the possibility of a composite narrative, the duplicated accounts, when compared with one another, afford valuable clues to the nature of the constituent documents, their vocabulary, style, interests, standpoint, theology.

Apart from the analogy of ancient and modern literature, the possibility of composite origin cannot be denied in the presence of certain undisputed phenomena of the historical books of the Bible itself. They refer to their own sources again and again. The book of the wars of Jehovah, the book of Jashar, the book of the acts of Solomon, the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah — these and many others are admittedly drawn upon and in some cases directly quoted. As the sources are then

[1] Rice, *e. g.*, thought out the plot and construction; Besant wrote the story, adopting and developing Rice's suggestions.

in certain cases expressly acknowledged, there can be no harm in criticism seeking, if possible, to discover the larger unacknowledged documentary sources. The duplicates, as we have seen, enable us to make a start, by giving us some insight into the characteristic differences of the sources.

But we are met by a difficulty on the very threshold. What is to hinder the so-called duplicates from being accounts of two different incidents, instead of two different accounts of the same incident? The critics, we are told, "systematically assume that, when one sin, like that of Abraham in the case of denying Sarah, has been committed, neither he nor anybody else can commit another like it."[1] But surely the case is not so simple. No critic in his senses ever assumed such a thing. It is not this consideration alone, but this coupled with others, that induces the critics to interpret two such accounts as duplicates of the same incident rather than as accounts of independent incidents. It was, no doubt, perfectly possible for Abraham to deny his wife twice, possible also for his son to deny his wife, though it would be not a little strange that the circumstances in all these cases should be so very similar. But when we find that the moral tone in the second story of Abraham's denial (Gen. xx.) is a distinct advance on that of the first (Gen. xii.), displaying a more delicate sense of the sin involved in Abraham's lie; when we further find that the second story indicates more developed religious conceptions, emphasizing as it does the power of intercessory prayer, and representing God

[1] "Bibliotheca Sacra," January, 1902, p. 201.

as coming in a dream, whereas in the first story He speaks to Abraham directly; and when, in addition to those undeniable differences, we find that Jehovah is the word used for God throughout the first story, and Elohim throughout the second — we begin to feel that there is a high probability that the two narratives are but different versions of the same incident, told from different standpoints.[1] If similar phenomena be found elsewhere — if, for example, two similar stories display the same differences in tone and conception, and *concomitant with these differences* a difference in the name of God — then the probability that the narratives are different versions of the same incident, and that there are really two documents here in question, is raised to a practical certainty. And precisely this we find to be the case; for the phenomena observed in the story of the denial are equally observable in very many other stories; and their cumulative evidence it is impossible to turn aside by any other hypothesis, for there is no other which, with anything like the same adequacy or probability, accounts for all the facts. These, then, are some of the grounds, and not the inadequate one already alluded to, which induce the critics to believe in the presence of duplicates.

There is the less occasion to resent the supposition of duplicate narratives within the Pentateuch as that very phenomenon is presented by other historical books. The most extensive illustration of this is the Book of Chronicles, which, in the main, covers the

[1] In this way such tales would incidentally illustrate the progress of moral and religious conceptions.

same ground as the Books of Samuel and Kings, often in the very same words, but regards the history from a different standpoint. The differences between the priestly and prophetic documents lying behind our Pentateuch, between, for example, the creation story as told in Genesis i. and ii. respectively, are roughly paralleled by the differences between Chronicles and Kings. Only, in the latter case the books are separate, whereas in the former they are combined in such a way as to form a new composite whole, which it is the task of criticism to analyze into its constituent parts. When, however, those parts are discovered, they stand in much the same relation to one another as Kings and Chronicles stand — that of a common theme treated from different points of view. Compositeness of narrative is not confined to the Pentateuch: it is tolerably obvious even in the Book of Samuel. Volck[1] goes so far as to say it cannot escape any attentive reader that at least two sources are blended in that book; and a recent scholar, who is inclined to believe that the two accounts of David's magnanimity in sparing Saul's life,[2] and of the origin of the proverb "Is Saul also among the prophets?"[3] represent in each case two different incidents, is yet willing to allow that the contradiction in the story of David's introduction to Saul "certainly proves that there were two accounts."[4] But if there are "certainly" two accounts here, there is at least a fairly

[1] "Heilige Schrift und Kritik," p. 85.

[2] 1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi. [3] 1 Sam. x. 12; xix. 24.

[4] Mackay, "The Churchman's Introduction to the Old Testament," pp. 122, 123.

strong presumption that the similar duplicates just noted are to be similarly explained; and minute examination and comparison make it practically certain that throughout the greater part of first Samuel there are two accounts of David's career.[1]

In the light of all these facts, the general possibility, if not the practical certainty, of the compositeness of the historical books must be conceded. Now let us consider how criticism proceeds to establish that compositeness in a particular case. For this purpose, it is common to begin with the Creation story. Certain phenomena there, however, slightly complicate the issue, and, on the whole, a more helpful illustration of critical method is to be found in the Flood story. Part of that story we shall transcribe, in order that it may make its own impression. It is unfortunate that the Authorized Version starts the narrative with a serious mistake: "And *God* saw" (Gen. vi. 5), for which the Revised Version rightly substitutes, "And *the Lord* saw," or more correctly *Jehovah*, which the English Bible almost uniformly renders by *the Lord*. This mistake shows that the linguistic argument, which is only one of many in favor of the critical position, cannot be adequately appreciated by one who is wholly dependent on the English translation.

And the Lord[2] saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the

[1] For a presentation of these sources side by side, see my "Messages of the Prophetic and Priestly Historians," pp. 147–162, where the resemblances and differences between these sources may be conveniently compared in the paraphrase.

[2] The quotations are given in the language of the English Revised Version.

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. vi. 5–8).

It will be noted that all through this section — once in each verse — the Divine Being is named *the Lord*, that is, Jehovah.

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. vi. 9, 10).

These verses certainly look like an interruption; and it may be further significant — whether it is or not we cannot determine till we read on — that here the Divine Being is called God (Elohim), and this applies to each of the next three verses.

And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth (Gen. vi. 11–13).

These verses seem to start the story again. They tell us practically nothing we do not already know, namely, that the earth was corrupt and God had purposed to

destroy it. Note, however, that as the word for the Divine Being has changed, the word rendered *destroy* has also changed. In verse 7 it was *machāh*, to blot out; in verse 13 it is *hishchîth*, to destroy.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it (Gen. vi. 14–16).

This is a description of the ark, and makes a proper enough continuation of the immediately preceding verses.

And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; every thing that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he (Gen. vi. 17–22).

This passage seems to continue the last — an observation confirmed by the circumstance that in verse 22, which points to the preceding verses, the Divine Being is called God (Elohim). A point to be particularly noted about this passage is its extreme circumstantiality — "thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee:" "fowl after their kind, cattle after their kind, every creeping thing of the ground after its kind:" "take unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee and for them:" "thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." There is here an almost legal precision and elaboration of detail. Note further that *two of every sort* of living thing are to be taken into the ark.

And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female; of the fowl also of the air, seven and seven, male and female: to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground. And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him (Gen. vii. 1–5).

At once we are struck with the change in the name of the Divine Being. In this section *the Lord* invites Noah into the ark, instructs him to take with him of clean beasts seven pairs, and of unclean one pair.

Now this section cannot be a continuation of the last, for according to verse 22 of that section Noah and his family with the animals are already in the ark; for it is recorded that he did what God commanded him, and that was the substance of the command. This section is therefore parallel to the last, recording, like it, the command of the Lord to Noah, and Noah's execution of that command. Notice that verse 5 is practically the same as verse 22, with the significant change in the use of the divine names. Further, the passage is not expressed with the same minute elaboration as the last. For example, instead of "thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives," appears the simpler phrase "thou and thy house." There is an important difference, too, between the two sections in the number of animals to be taken into the ark: in the former passage, it was two of every kind; here, two of unclean and seven pairs of clean. It has often been said that the second passage simply amplifies the first and makes its general directions more explicit. But that would surely be an awkward style of amplification — to begin by saying "a pair of every sort," and to go on by explaining "one pair of one sort and seven pairs of another sort." But there is no necessity for accusing the original writer of such literary impotence. For this passage is, as we have seen, not continuous with the former, but parallel to it; and therefore we are prepared to do justice to this important distinction between the two. It is further no accident that, in the two passages, different words are used to express "male and female" — in the former (vi. 19) the words are somewhat technical, in

the latter they are more ordinary — "the man and his wife." (So twice in vii. 2.)[1]

We have now a number of phenomena on the basis of which we may form a tentative judgment. The narrative is obviously not a unity. Two accounts are given of the corruption of the earth, of God's command to Noah to enter the ark with his family and with specimens of all the animals, and of Noah's execution of that command. These accounts are distinguished by different names for God, by a somewhat different vocabulary (*e. g.* destroy, male and female), and by not unimportant differences in the recital of fact (*e. g.* in the number and classification of the animals which entered the ark). Practically all doubt of the compositeness of the story is dispelled when the parallel accounts are placed side by side.

Corruption of the earth (vi. 5–13).

Prophetic Narrative (Jehovistic).	*Priestly Narrative (Elohistic).*
	These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (vi. 9, 10).
And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the	And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence (vi. 11).

[1] vii. 3, which uses the priestly words for "male and female," has been touched by the redactor.

thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (vi. 5).

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (vi. 6).

And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them (vi. 7).

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (vi. 8).

And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth (vi. 12).

And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth (vi. 13).

Description of the ark (vi. 14–16).

The divine command and Noah's execution thereof (vi. 17–vii. 5).

The Prophetic Narrative (Jehovistic).

For[1] yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground (vii. 4).

And the Lord said unto

The Priestly Narrative (Elohistic).

And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; every thing that is in the earth shall die (vi. 17).

But I will establish my

[1] The order of the priestly narrative, which determined the final form of the story, has here been followed. Verse 4 has been printed out of its place, simply to show its parallelism with vi. 17.

Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation (vii. 1).	covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee (vi. 18).
Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female (vii. 2).	And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female (vi. 19).
Of the fowl also of the air, seven and seven, male and female: to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth (vii. 3).	Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive (vi. 20).
	And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them (vi. 21).
And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him (vii. 5).	Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he (vi. 22).

Any one who is convinced that this method and analysis are correct has a good deal of material which will guide him in his analysis of the rest of the story. The name of the Divine Being, where it exists, is an exceedingly important clue; where it does not exist, there are other clues practically as decisive. For example, every one has been puzzled by the duration

of the flood, the truth being that each version has its own story to tell. The Jehovist narrative announces that it will come in seven days and last forty (vii. 4), therefore the verses which involve this view of the narrative will belong to this source, for example, vii. 12 and viii. 6–12, etc.; according to this version, the flood lasted in all sixty-eight days (7+40+7+7+7). The other verses, which represent the waters as prevailing for one hundred and fifty days (*e. g.* vii. 24), and assign a period of over a year (cf. vii. 11 and viii. 14) to the general duration of the flood, will belong to the other narrative. So the verses which, whether implicitly or explicitly, distinguish the clean from the unclean animals, will belong to the Jehovist document (*e. g.* viii. 20); those which do not, will belong to the other (*e. g.* vii. 15). The growing knowledge of the characteristics of the documents which every new such acquisition brings, enables us to delimit the remaining verses still further; until finally every verse, by a natural and easy process, finds its place within one document or the other. In this way the extraordinary repetitions,[1] elaborations, and sequences are satisfactorily explained.

Now this is the critical method. Is it reasonable or is it not? The phenomena are too striking to be evaded; does this explanation satisfy them or does it not? It is not a theory introduced *ab extra:* it is an explanation suggested by the phenomena themselves. The alternative, after making every allowance for the historiographical methods of the East, is to suppose that the author — on the assumption that the piece is

[1] Cf. vii. 13, 14 (P.) with vii. 7, 8 (J.).

an original unity — was destitute of the first elements of literary skill; and this surely cannot be said of the writer who gave us so fine a passage as viii. 6–12. Rather is it not clear that this is the work of a redactor, careful, conservative, and reverent, who had before him two documents, and whose aim was to preserve as much as he consistently could of both?

II

From history let us pass to prophecy. Here the critical method may be illustrated by a brief consideration of the latter part of Isaiah (chs. xl. to lxvi.); and for our purpose a section of this will be sufficient (xl. to xlviii.). Why is it that the critics so unanimously deny this prophecy to Isaiah, the son of Amoz, and assign it to the exile (*circa* 540)? Not because they regard prediction as impossible; the reality of prediction is repeatedly claimed by this prophecy,[1] and the critical no less than the traditional view of the prophecy compels us to admit the truth of the claim. The prophet predicts something, and his prediction is fulfilled. But what is that something which he predicts? It is not the exile itself — that is everywhere presupposed — but redemption from the exile; and that redemption was accomplished through the instrumentality of Cyrus, on the critical view, not indeed long after, but in any case after, the prediction itself was made. So it is not a question of the possibility or impossibility of predictive prophecy. The critics are led to their belief in the

[1] Cf. xli. 26; xlii. 9; xliv. 8; xlviii. 3–7.

exilic origin of the prophecy by a consideration of the facts themselves.

What, then, are those facts? Obviously the legitimate impression which the section makes as a whole can only be gathered from continuous reading. But some of the more significant verses may be singled out for special consideration.

Israel is in despair.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel,
My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed away from my God? (xl. 27).

From what or from whom is she suffering?

I was wroth with my people, I profaned mine inheritance, and gave them into thine hand.
Thou didst show them no mercy; upon the aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke (xlvii. 6).

Into whose hands, then, was Israel given? Into the hands of the Chaldæans; for

Sit silent, and enter into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldæans:
For thou shalt no more be called the Lady of kingdoms . . .
I gave them into thine hand (xlvii. 5, 6).

The Babylonian background is as plain as words can make it. In the light of the following verses, it is clear that Israel is languishing on Babylonian soil, if not in Babylonian prisons.

For your sake I have sent to Babylon (xliii. 14).
Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldæans (xlviii. 20).

Israel's own cities, including the capital with its temple, are destroyed.

(He) saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited;
And of the cities of Judah, They shall be built . . .
Saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built;
And of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid (xliv. 26–28).
He (*i. e.* Cyrus) shall build my city (xlv. 13).

The people then are exiles in Babylon.

He shall let my exiled ones go free (xlv. 13).

And it is these broken-hearted exiles whom the prophet is addressing; his audience is a real, not an imaginary, one.

Lift up your eyes on high (xl. 26).

On this scene of despair and sorrow the prophet appears with a message of comfort.

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people (xl. 1).

For redemption is drawing nigh.

Speak home to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her
That her warfare is accomplished (xl. 2).

Israel's God will not forget her.

Thou shalt not be forgotten of me (xliv. 21).

What Israel needs, then, and is promised, is redemption from exile. But how is that to be brought about? By a great conqueror who is twice expressly named as Cyrus, and occasionally alluded to as a figure almost too familiar to need naming:

Named. — That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
And shall perform all my pleasure (xliv. 28).
Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him . . . I will go before thee (xlv. 1, 2).

Unnamed. — I have raised him up in righteousness (xlv. 13).
I have raised up one from the north, and he is come;
From the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name (xli. 25).

Cyrus, then, is to be the human instrument of the redemption and restoration.

He shall build my city, and let my exiled ones go free (xlv. 13).

And the redemption of Israel is to come through the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus.

He shall perform his pleasure on Babylon,
And his arm shall be on the Chaldæans (xlviii. 14).

The situation is very plain. Israel is enduring the sorrows of exile in Babylon. But a great menace to the Babylonian power has been raised up in the person of Cyrus. He has embarked on his victorious career. The prophet sees in him one who is divinely called to deliver Israel. Redemption is only a question of a year or two. Soon the triumphant Cyrus will be upon Babylon; then Israel shall be free. She will go home to her own land; her cities and temples will be rebuilt.

If there had been no tradition to the effect that this part of the book was written by the Isaiah who spoke

more than a century and a half before, undoubtedly we should have supposed that the prophet who uttered this original and inspiriting word lived and moved in the very midst of the situation which he so sympathetically describes — that he was himself a member of the people whose sorrow he meets with his message of hope. But a tradition which goes back at least to the second century B. C. points the other way. It is very natural to suppose that a section of the book bearing Isaiah's name should have been written by him. But the assumption underlying this expectation is that every part of a prophecy must come from the prophet by whose name the book is known. In the Book of Isaiah, however, there are the best of reasons for supposing that this is not the case. It is hardly reasonable to suppose, for example, that the section embracing chs. xxxvi. to xxxix. is from him, as he is spoken of throughout in the third person (xxxvii. 21; xxxviii. 1, 21) and the very same section, which is historical rather than prophetic, occurs in the Book of Kings (2 Kings xviii. 17–xx. 19). And there are other sections which are *expressly* assigned to him (cf. xiii. 1), as they would hardly have needed to be, if the opening verse was a guarantee that the whole book came from his hand. These facts are a sufficient answer to the argument that Isaiah xl.–lxvi. must be from Isaiah, because they appear in the book known by his name.

If there is nothing of this kind, then, to compel us to believe that Isaiah was the author, it remains to ask who the real author was, or, at any rate, when he lived. Now one of the cardinal principles of prophecy

— a principle to which, apart from this disputed section, there is no exception — is that the message of a prophet is not only addressed to, but relevant to, the contemporary situation. Doubtless the prophet sees beyond that. His power to do that — to ascend his watch tower, like Habakkuk, and survey the distant sweep of the field — is partly what makes him a prophet. There need be no attempt to deny that the prophet could predict: that, as we saw, is claimed by this prophecy and admitted by the critic. But in the large body of his message he speaks to his own contemporaries: rebukes *their* sins, and comforts *their* sorrows. This is a simple fact. Amos and Hosea address themselves to the situation of Jeroboam the Second's time. The prophecy of Jeremiah is so inwoven with contemporary history that it is practically our only authority for the details of that history. Ezekiel speaks to the exiles, deals with their fears, hopes, needs, and problems; Haggai and Zechariah appeal to the situation after the return; and so on. We will not argue that no moral end would be served through a prophet being transported in spirit into another time; nor will we say that it is impossible. But this we can say, that analogy is completely against it. In every other case[1] the time in which a prophet lived could be at least approximately, and in certain cases accurately, inferred from the substance of his prophecy. If that rule held here — and we have seen that the appearance of the prophecy in the Book of Isaiah does not bind us to the Isaianic authorship —

[1] With the possible exception of Joel, where much of the data is capable of being referred either to pre-exilic or post-exilic times.

then we should infer without hesitation that the author lived during the Babylonian exile, and delivered his message not long before Cyrus took Babylon. While the oppressor in Isaiah's time is Assyria, to this author it is Babylon. While Jeremiah predicts the exile, this author presupposes it. He names Cyrus not in the language of prediction, but as an existing, mighty fact — a fact of terror to Babylon, of comfort and reassurance to Israel.

Criticism has much more to say in support of the late date of this section. But what has already been offered is a normal specimen of critical method. Is it reasonable or is it not?

III

Let us now glance at the critical method in its application to the Psalms; and for our purpose it will be instructive to take a psalm ascribed to David. We here select the fortieth, as having a special interest of its own. To begin with, the critics, passing at first over the superscription, "For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David," which is obviously no part of the psalm proper, would at once proceed to the internal evidence afforded by the Psalm itself. The most obvious point about it is its sudden change of tone in the middle from gratitude to lament. The temper of both parts of the Psalm is so different that some are disposed to believe that two independent psalms have been put together. It will be better, however, to find, if possible, some historical situation within which both parts of the psalm are at the same

time intelligible. Assuming for the moment that the psalm is a unity — and it is at any rate a unity to the final editor and to us — let us try to discover who the speaker is.

I waited patiently for the Lord;
And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry (verse 1).

Who is the I? Is it an individual or the church that is speaking? Verse 3 with its "praise to *our* God," suggests — though it does not absolutely compel — a wider outlook than the individual; but this view receives substantial confirmation from verse 5, not only because it speaks of the many wonderful works which Jehovah has done, but still more because of the words

And thy thoughts which are to us-ward.

Is the wider interpretation of the *I* then not the more natural? In that case, it is the church that is speaking, or at least the individual in the name of the church. Now let us look at verse 2.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay;
And he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

Is this to be interpreted literally or metaphorically? Some, interpreting it literally, refer it to the fortunes of Jeremiah in the dungeon. But apart from the fact that the metaphorical interpretation is equally possible, and perhaps more natural, the literal view will be impossible, if we were right in conclud-

ing that this psalm reflects the experience of the church. In that case, we should have to find some horror in the history of the people, which could be fittingly described in these words; and although we know that history much too little to estimate all the possibilities, it will hardly be denied that these metaphors would appropriately characterize the exile. The probability of this will have to be tested by the subsequent verses.

> And he hath put a new song in my mouth,
> Even praise unto our God,
> Many shall see it, and fear,
> And shall trust in the Lord (verse 3).

Now the *new song* is the term applied in the latter part of Isaiah to the song which Israel is to sing to Jehovah for His deliverance of the people from exile.

> Sing unto the Lord a new song (Is. xlii. 10).

But more. The effect of the deliverance wrought for Israel in the psalm is to be the conversion of many to Jehovah, that is, to *Israel's* God; and, though not absolutely necessary, it is most natural to suppose that those who are to be converted are heathen.[1] Now precisely this point — the world-wide influence and destiny of Israel's gospel of redemption — is repeatedly emphasized in the latter part of Isaiah: cf. the passage already quoted —

> Sing unto the Lord a new song,
> And his praise from the end of the earth (Is. xlii. 10).

[1] This point is obscured by the rendering *The Lord*.

Cf. Ps. lxvii. 1, 2.

> God be merciful to us, and bless us. . . .
> That thy way may be known upon earth,
> Thy saving health among all nations.

Now the full force of Ps. xl. 5 begins to be felt.

> Many are the wonderful works which thou hast done.

This verse is a swift retrospect of God's love from the distant days of the exodus to the recent deliverance from exile. In such a context — cf. *thy thoughts which are to us-ward* — it is really too large to be applicable only to the individual.

How, then, is Israel to recompense this God for all His goodness? Not through sacrifice and offering, but through obedience to His will, the law written on the pages of Scripture and on the heart; for

> Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
> Mine ears hast thou opened:
> Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
> Then said I, Lo, I am come;
> In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me (verses 6, 7, R. V., margin).

What is this book? Clearly, in such a context, a book which laid little stress on the requirements of sacrifice. Now that condition is hardly satisfied by the Pentateuch, of which so large a proportion is taken up with the very things which God is here declared not to require. Whatever the book was, it must, it would seem, have included at least some of the eighth

century prophets: the sentiment of the psalm is precisely paralleled by such a passage as Hosea vi. 6—*I desire mercy and not sacrifice;* cf, Amos v. 25, Micah vi. 6–8. This consideration would make an exilic date almost the earliest possible; and thus our view of the psalm receives important confirmation. But the exile would seem to be over; the song of deliverance is already in Israel's mouth. And if the latter part of the psalm is connected with the former, as it well may be, then the whole psalm might come from a period soon[1] after the return, when the brilliant hopes of the exiles had received so bitter a disappointment.

In this way, a psalm which a very ancient tradition ascribes to David, is assigned by criticism to a period later than him by five centuries. The result may be startling, but is the process by which it is reached unnatural or unreasonable? It is not claimed that the result is certain; only that it is highly probable, and that it meets the varied elements of the case more adequately than does the view of the authorship implied by the superscription.

Illustrations of critical method have now been drawn from history, prophecy, and poetry. These illustrations are perfectly typical; it is in these ways that criticism works. Mathematical accuracy in the results is not to be expected, as the material is too meagre to admit of it; but, by the use of these and similar methods, results have been reached along certain lines which are so highly probable as to be

[1] Or long after, if we assume that verse 7 implies the practical canonicity of the prophets.

practically certain, and which are commanding an ever-widening circle of allegiance. Are these methods legitimate and reasonable or are they not?

IV

Let us now briefly consider one of the problems in another department, of which criticism has keenly felt the pressure, and the way in which a solution has been sought — the problem of the patriarchal stories. Are they strictly historical or are they legendary? Now it must be confessed that the discussion of this question has occasionally been marked, on both sides, by somewhat rash and inconsiderate dogmatism. At the same time, the question is not so simple as it looks to one who has never gone into it and it may be worth while to state some of the difficulties which have led the critics to doubt the strict historicity of the narratives; for, if there has been dogmatism, there has also been argument.

(i) First, then, it is obvious that the genealogies cannot always be literally interpreted. An examination of Genesis x., for example, proves that names which seem to be names of persons are often in reality names of peoples or countries. The Hebrew plural masculine ends in *îm*; any one who reads the chapter through with this fact in mind, and notes the number of words which have this ending, will be astonished. Take, for example, verses 13 and 14: Mizraim begat Ludim with six others whose names end in *îm*. Mizraim is the regular word in the Old Testament for Egypt; so that this verse is only another

way of saying that the Lydians, etc., are sprung from Egypt. Many names which are not plural in form, yet are intended without doubt to refer to peoples; see, in particular, verses 15–19: *Canaan begat . . . the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite; and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite; and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.* In every one of these cases the article is used; the form of the word is precisely the same as in the similar enumerations of the Canaanite peoples scattered throughout the Pentateuch, cf. Gen. xv. 19–21, where, in spite of the plural of the English Authorized Version, the Hebrew words with the single exception of the Rephaim, are in the singular. In other cases, some of the names are really names of places; *e. g.*, Tarshish, in verse 4, a son of Javan, or Greece. This whole verse offers an instructive combination of places and peoples: *The sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim* (or rather *Rodanim*). The first two words are names of places not yet with certainty identified, while the last two are names of peoples, probably the inhabitants of Cyprus and Rhodes; and the whole verse practically means, "connected with Greece were her colonies in Italy and Sicily, together with the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes." The whole makes much the same kind of impression as if we were to say that the sons of Britain were England, Scotland, the Irish and the Welsh, and England begat the Canadian and the Australian, etc. Obviously the interest of this table in Genesis x. is in no way diminished by this circumstance; only it is the interest of ethnology colored

by geographical and historical associations, not the interest of genealogy. From this point of view, it is one of the most important ethnological monuments of the ancient world. It illustrates the relations conceived to subsist between the peoples of a large part of the then known world, and preserves some valuable historical and ethnological facts, or traditions, which perhaps, like the illustration above in which *England* begets the Canadian and Australian, occasionally need correction. The Hittites, *e. g.*, were not racially connected with the Canaanites (verse 15) nor the Canaanites with the Egyptians (cf. verse 6, where the sons of Ham are Ethiopia, Egypt, North Africa, and Canaan).

It is considerations like these which, at any rate within this chapter, are unanswerable, that have led many of the critics to see in the earliest names of Hebrew story the personification of peoples or tribes. For example, it is not a little surprising to find that long after Abraham is so old a man that the birth of a child to him is regarded by Sarah as an impossibility, it is recorded, without surprise or comment, that he had six children by his second wife (Gen. xxv. 1, 2). When we find that some of these children bear the names of Arabian tribes (*e. g.* Midian) and that the son of one of these children has three sons, all of whose names end in *îm*, and are therefore names of peoples (verse 3), we begin to see the relative justification for supposing that these notices inform us about tribal rather than personal relations. This suspicion receives suggestive confirmation from the word to Rebekah with regard to the birth of her children.

Two nations are in thy womb,
And two peoples shall be separated even from thy bowels;
And one people shall be stronger than the other people,
And the elder shall serve the younger (Gen. xxv. 23).

(ii) Another reason for questioning the strict historicity of the patriarchal stories is the vast interval of time between the incidents and the record of them. From Genesis xiv., the date of Abraham may be approximately inferred as 2250 B. C. Now assuming that the critical view of the dates of the earliest, that is, the prophetic documents in the Pentateuch, is correct (roughly 900 to 750 B. C.), the writers stand no less than fourteen centuries from the incidents they record — as far as the English historian of to-day is distant from St. Columba. Even assuming the Mosaic authorship, the record is over ten centuries later than the history. In other words, the historian of that early period is as much at a disadvantage as the modern historian of the times of Alfred the Great. Indeed, unless he has some special means of knowing the facts, he is at a much greater disadvantage; for the modern historian has chronicles and books innumerable to consult, which, after making every allowance for the widespread knowledge of the art of writing in the ancient world, has no real parallel in the case before us. Besides, no claim is ever made by the writer that he had access to special sources of information. So far as we can tell, he may be depending on tradition. Indeed this would account, as nothing else will, for the slight discrepancies between parallel accounts; and it is well known that tradition, though it preserves much, loses, confounds, and ob-

scures much. In the face of the variations which the written statements of Samuel and Kings undergo about three centuries afterwards on the pages of the Chronicler,[1] it would be idle to deny the possibility of even more serious modifications of a tradition which was purely oral.

It is only natural, then, in estimating the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, to remember the immense interval that separates the incidents from the record; and whether, in the absence of any guarantee, a history which is from ten to fourteen centuries later than the events with which it deals, can have all the value of a history that is contemporary, may well be the subject of reverent doubt. Many incidental statements betray the touch of a later hand. Abraham, for example, is said to have pursued a section of the invading army as far as Dan (Gen. xiv. 14). Now there was no Dan in Abraham's time; according to an interesting notice in Judges xviii. 29, the original name of the place was Laish: it was not called Dan till the time of the Judges (1200–1000 B. C.). This fact alone, unless we assume that an original reference to Laish in the Abraham story had been subsequently altered to Dan, would be enough to bring down that story to a point eleven hundred years later;[2] and it would be little short of a miracle — so the critical argument runs — if pure

[1] Cf. 2 Chr. viii. 2, where Hiram gives cities to Solomon, though in 1 Kings ix. 11–14, it was Solomon who had given them to Hiram, in return for a loan.

[2] Considerations like these — not to mention others — dispose of the theory, which has no support in fact, probability, or analogy, that the traditions were preserved from the very earliest times in writing.

history had been orally preserved across so many centuries.[1]

(iii) A further difficulty in the way of accepting the patriarchal narratives as strictly historical has been their religious implications. It is difficult, for example, to reconcile the theophanies with the teaching about God in the New Testament, or even in the more exalted parts of the Old. The story of the appearance of Jehovah to Abraham in Genesis xviii. is a singularly attractive one. It has all the freshness and naïveté of the early world; and it suggests noble thoughts as to the fellowship of God with mortal men. But literally interpreted, it has difficulties of its own. Are we to suppose that God really ate of "the butter, and milk, and the calf which Abraham had dressed"? The narrative says so; but Christ says, "God is spirit;" and elsewhere we are assured, "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18; cf. vi. 46).

There is a real difficulty here — a difficulty which is heightened by the analogy of other literatures; for if it be a literal fact that God stood as a man before Abraham, spoke with him audible words and enjoyed his hospitality beneath the tree, why may we not accept Homer's statement as a literal fact, that Athene caught Achilles by his yellow hair and spoke to him?

[1] Herodotus has several stories of prodigies to relate even of the Persian war. Cf. in particular viii. 37–39, where sacred weapons were set by unseen hands before a temple; two crags burst away from Parnassus, and killed many of the Persians; and two resurrected Greek heroes of the olden time, of more than human stature, pursued and slew the foe. Only about half a century can have elapsed between these incidents and the record of them.

Have both these statements not to be tested by the notion of the spirituality of God? There can be no question of their religious suggestiveness and power; the question is as to their historicity. And that question is raised not by the caprice of the critic, but, as we have seen, by the express teaching of Christ. Even conservative scholars sometimes waive the historicity of such theophanies. Höpfl, for example, writes thus: "In the Biblical narrative God very frequently appears on the arena of the history. He warns, or encourages to this enterprise or that, frustrates the execution of a plan, blocks the way of a proposal, rewards, reproaches the children of Israel with their misconduct. We should hardly properly grasp the sense of the Biblical historian, were we to suppose that in all these cases, God was immediately and visibly acting, like a *deus ex machina*. What is here ascribed to God, will in most cases, have been done by some prominent personality or other who was filled with the spirit of God, and enjoyed among the people the reputation of being a man of God. If God made use of this man, then it was God himself who did what he did."[1] This argument, which is not very convincing, and which, in trying to save the text, takes grave liberties with its plain meaning, yet serves the useful purpose of emphasizing the difficulty which is created for an honest and reverent mind by the narratives of the theophanies. It is further to be noted that the story of Joseph, which shows a ma-

[1] "Die höhere Bibelkritik," pp. 47, 48. Luther often adopts a somewhat similar principle. He thinks, *e. g.*, that Rebekah may have received the oracle in Gen. xxv. 23 through Shem.

turer literary art than the earlier stories, does not present the same religious difficulties as they do. There is no theophany in it at all; God is rather seen as a providence, shaping and governing human life.

(iv) The religious argument has also been urged from another and apparently an opposite side. In spite of the primitive nature of the theophanies, which are paralleled by many other early literatures, the general religious tone of the patriarchs is much superior to that of the heroes in the Book of Judges. It is impossible, some one has said, that the ancestors of men like Ehud, Gideon and Jephthah could have led such lives as the patriarchs are recorded to have lived. Of course those who believe in the strict historicity of the narratives will regard the society reflected in the Book of Judges as an illustration of the too familiar phenomenon known as degeneracy. But that interpretation, though possible, is not necessary, and most of the critics would add, not probable. In the time of the Judges, for example, human sacrifice appears as a thing that can be tolerated. It is not common; it is an awful moment when Jephthah offers his daughter in sacrifice. But he does offer her. Now in the story of Abraham, human sacrifice appears as a thing intolerable, at least to the religion of Jehovah. In the impulse to sacrifice his son, Abraham is like any other Semite; the revelation, the new thing, that which is to distinguish Israel's religion from the sister religions, is contained in the words, "Lay *not* thine hand upon the lad." That is the voice from heaven. This story looks almost like a protest against the practice which in the time of the Judges, could at

least be tolerated. It does not, of course, necessarily follow that the Abraham story is later than the other; but it certainly remains a problem why, if the religious attainments of the patriarchal age were so high, those of the age of the judges were so low. It is in large measure the noble prophetic tone of these narratives, so much superior to the tone of the Judges, and bearing such strong affinities to the teaching and spirit of the great prophets, that has confirmed the critics in their belief, reached along other lines of evidence, that the writing of these stories falls shortly before the prophetic period.[1]

These then are some of the reasons which have led the critics to doubt whether the patriarchal narratives are, in the strict sense, altogether historical.[2] It is no part of the purpose of the present sketch to criticise the adequacy of the arguments; it will be enough if they have been felt to be reasonable. Besides, the same criticism which has led to those conclusions, has also something to say of a constructive kind, and en-

[1] There is no real inconsistency between the advanced religious ideas of the patriarchal stories, and the much older and more primitive theophanies, with which those ideas are often associated. Such stories as Gen. xviii. would be on the lips of the people for generations; they constitute part of the material by which the prophetic historian is bound. But, as a rule, he breathes into them the profound spirit of the prophetic religion, as he does with the Babylonian stories of the Flood, etc. Cf. Chapter X. There can be no question that, whatever the dates of the documents may be, they contain much very ancient material. Everything points that way.

[2] For further discussion, reference may be made to the articles on the patriarchs in the recent Bible dictionaries; also to Gunkel, "The Legends of Genesis" (English translation); Guthe, "Geschichte des Volkes Israel," pp. 161–168; Reuss, "Geschichte der heiligen Schriften des A. T.," pp. 163–173.

courages a belief in the historicity — if not of all the details — at any rate of the broad outlines of the early Hebrew stories. It has pointed out that the amount and nature of the personal detail in some of the stories is hardly reconcilable with the view that the patriarchs are nothing but personifications of tribes, or idealizations of Hebrew virtues. It has further reminded us that there is a double, and sometimes a triple tradition for the early stories — each document telling essentially the same tale with variations, and thus confirming the substantial historicity of the salient facts.[1] The discussion may be concluded in the sober words of Driver: "The view which on the whole may be said best to satisfy the circumstances of the case is the view that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are historical persons, and that the accounts which we have of them are *in outline* historically true, but that their characters are idealized, and their biographies in many respects colored by the feelings and associations of a later age."[2] And again: "It must further be allowed that the characters of the patriarchs are colored *religiously* by the feelings and beliefs of a later age. In the days of the patriarchs, religion must have been in a rudimentary stage: there are traces of this in the idea, for instance, of the revelations of deity being confined to particular spots, and in the reverence paid to sacred trees or pillars; but at the same time the patriarchs often express themselves in terms suggesting much riper spiritual capacities and experiences. Here we

[1] See especially Kittel's treatment of these stories in his "History of the Hebrews."

[2] Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," ii. p. 534.

cannot but trace the hands of the narrators, who were men penetrated by definite moral and religious ideas, and who, writing with a didactic aim, idealized to a certain extent the characters of the patriarchs, and, while not stripping them of the distinctive features with which they were traditionally invested, so filled in the outlines supplied by tradition as to present the great figures of Hebrew antiquity as *spiritual types*, examples, for imitation, or warning, as the case might be, for successive generations." [1]

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 535. For a defence of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, see an article by Professor König on "Shall we believe the Narrative of Israel's growth?" in "The Sunday School Times," December 14, 1901. A brief, but good discussion will be found in "The Book of Genesis," by Professor G. W. Wade, who reaches much the same conclusion as Driver. "The patriarchal narrative is, in its broad features, historical, but, from the lateness of the documents in which it is contained it may be suspected of including an ideal element" (p. 54).

CHAPTER VII

THE ESSENCE OF PROTESTANTISM

Criticism is the inalienable right and duty of all churches which call themselves Protestant; for Protestantism itself, in the narrower sense of the word, had its origin in the fearless criticism of the then existing church. In another sense, Protestantism is older than the Reformation; it is as old as the hatred of lies and the passion for truth. The essential spirit of Protestantism has been often obscured by the not unnatural tendency to identify it with a body of doctrine, and to see it in opposition to the doctrines of the Romish Church. But the moment it is so identified, it ceases to be, in the strict sense, Protestantism; for as it originated in criticism and protest, it reserves to itself the eternal and indefeasible right of criticism and protest. In the words of Frederic Myers, "One might say that the characteristics of Protestantism lie rather in the maintenance of this spirit of freedom, than in the profession of any definite peculiarities, either doctrinal or ecclesiastical."[1] Protestantism is the spirit that is ever ready to challenge all that obscures the truth, whether that be the teaching and traditions of an ancient church, the solemn decisions of ecclesiastical councils, the authoritative decrees of

[1] "Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology," p. 365.

Popes, or even the traditions which in its own name have been established. The exigencies of Reformation controversy, similar in their effects to the exigencies of the Gnostic and other controversies of the early church, precipitated the beliefs of the Reformation, in no long time, into a form almost if not quite as scholastic as the scholasticism which it repudiated; but it would be unfair to Protestantism to identify it absolutely with the particular theological systems which, in a given historical environment, it more or less necessarily assumed. It is a spirit; it moves; it impels; it compels; it revises; it reforms; it creates.[1] No historical form can ever do it full justice. As some one has happily said, "The Reformation was a revolt against finality, and it would be strange if finality were to be its result."

Protestantism is the human answer to the divine call to "prove all things." It is the duty of the Protestant reverently but fearlessly to test all things, especially the things which concern his most holy faith. The things which cannot stand this test, it is better that he should lose; they are but cumberers of his ground. And the things which have stood it triumphantly, he will love and trust with the profounder confidence. He must not have the lie in his soul, as Plato would say; in whatever things he is deceived, he must not allow himself to be deceived there. The

[1] Cf. Harnack: "What Luther did was not to create for us a finished religious system — systems come and go — but to set before us a perennial task, viz., on the basis of the gospel to be ever reforming anew and ever protesting courageously against indifference and *ex cathedra* utterances" ("Martin Luther in seiner Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Wissenschaft und der Bildung," p. 26).

true Protestant will be the last man to fear investigation. If it be real investigation, earnest, thorough, and brave, he will welcome it as an ally of the truth. He knows that the truth — and that alone — will make him free. Doubtless intellect alone will not settle the great problems of faith. The mind of man will not by merely intellectual appliances enter into the mind of the Spirit which throbs through Scripture. The Reformers kept this truth nobly in the forefront. Luther, *e. g.*, insists that besides thorough linguistic knowledge, the help of the holy Spirit is necessary, besides fear, humility, and devout prayer.[1] The Reformation was a moral even more than an intellectual protest. But the presence of these indispensable spiritual qualities, though they will lead a man into as much of the truth as is necessary for his salvation, will not, by themselves, put him in possession of all that is contained in the Scriptures. To attain that even approximately, he needs helps of many kinds, helps which are happily multiplying abundantly in our day; but more even than those he needs the love of truth, and the desire to follow her freely and gladly wherever she will take him. To resent or circumscribe the inquiry of one who brings to his task the spiritual qualifications to which we have alluded, is to deny the first principles of Protestantism.[2] It fur-

[1] For a fine summary of the methods and spirit of the Reformers, see Diestel, "Geschichte des Alten Testamentes in der christlichen Kirche," pp. 230 ff.

[2] "It should be sufficient for us to hold fast tenaciously — aggressively if occasion requires — to the root principle of the Reformation, that reason in man is the candle of the Lord, and that by reason we are to prove all things and to hold fast to that which after proof is

ther creates in the minds of men who stand outside the church the injurious and unfortunate suspicion that she cannot afford to risk an unfettered investigation of the truth on which she stands; and it raises for them the question why liberty is granted for the investigation of every kind of truth, but the one on which the church claims that practically everything depends, both for this world and that which is to come.

Fortunately the churches as a whole, not even altogether excepting the Roman Catholic Church, are practically conceding to their scholars the right of investigation. There is hardly any living church in any part of the world, which has not made more or less influential contributions of a distinctly Protestant kind, to the literature of Biblical discussion; and by that we do not mean a contribution to the support of Protestant doctrine, but one animated by the Protestant spirit. There are men in every church gladly conscious of standing in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and humbly yet fearlessly prosecuting the study of His truth. But though the churches tolerate, and in a sense encourage investigation, there are influences at work tending to circumscribe its limits, to dictate how far it shall go and where it shall stop. These influences are very powerful. They represent a great deal of the best, the noblest, the most devout life of the church. They may seem to make for Protestant doctrine. But they are not themselves Protestant influences. "We are

found good. . . . 'Where are we to stop?' is a question which none but a man void of living faith would ask." W. F. Cobb, "Theology Old and New," pp. 29, 30.

all aware now," says Harnack, "that to dictate to knowledge the result at which it is to arrive is to make knowledge impossible."[1] Investigation is at an end, if the result is already a foregone conclusion. The very word means following upon the tracks of something; you cannot go both where the tracks lead and somewhere else. You cannot give a man the right to investigate and at the same time bind him, in advance, to one particular conclusion. The right you give him is in that case, a delusion: you give with the one hand what you take away with the other. There is no law to prevent your doing so; but you cannot do so and consistently call yourself a Protestant. In opposition to centuries of tradition, the Reformers faced the facts of Scripture for themselves with their emancipated reason, and under the good spirit of God, reached their own conclusions. They did not all agree among themselves. They differed on some of the most vital points. Luther — giant as he was alike in intellect and faith — seems to many to have imperilled the unity of the great work which Providence had enabled him to do, through his misinterpretation of a metaphor. But they were all alike Protestants. Their differences among themselves were as nothing to the great gulf which separated them from the church against whose abuses they had protested. Custom was lord of the one; reason and conscience were lords of the other.

We are not forgetting the part that Scripture played in all this; how it was the spirit that moved in it that stirred the Reformers to attack the giant

[1] "Thoughts on Protestantism" (English Translation) p. 24.

system which had now become but a hollow and immoral caricature of the New Testament Church. The Protestant appeal was an appeal to the Scripture. But had that been all, it could have been answered, because the Catholics appealed to Scripture too. The Protestant appeal however, was unanswerable, because it was an appeal to what, for want of a better word, we may call the reasonable interpretation of Scripture. Centuries of often clever, sometimes tortuous, but almost always irrelevant allegorizing had obscured the original meaning of the Bible. It had become a dark and impossible book, for the interpretation of which the layman was entirely dependent upon the decisions of the Church. Luther[1] denied that it was a dark book. "The Scripture is for all, and is clear enough — as much as is necessary for salvation — though obscure enough for souls which wish to know and investigate more." Speaking very broadly, the meaning of Scripture was on the face of it; a passage which was obscure might be illumined by a clearer passage elsewhere. That a book meant what it said; that reason is not to be violated in an attempt to believe that it means something else, some unintelligible thing, which will need special interpretation: a simple thing this principle seems to us, and yet it is one of the greatest acquisitions in human history. It broke the force of ecclesiastical systems that were hoary with age. It created new worlds of

[1] Luther in the main repudiated the allegorical method. At best, he holds, it has only the value of ornament. It never carries conviction unless when supported by Scripture (*e. g.* Gal. iv. 22, 1 Pet. iii. 21). He severely criticises the allegorical methods of Origen, and others of the fathers. Cf. Eger, "Luther's Auslegung des A. T.," pp. 24, 25.

life and thought. It inspires all the noblest thought and enterprise of modern civilization.

The appeal of the Reformers was to Scripture — a Scripture, however, which neither needed nor would tolerate for its interpretation the trammels of tradition or councils or Popes; in other words, to a reasonable interpretation of Scripture. In this sense the Reformers were rationalists. Doubtless they denounced reason, and proclaimed their submission to Scripture; but the different interpretations which were presently put upon facts and institutions of the most commanding importance, are enough to show that Scripture is not simply an objective thing, before whose word one can humbly bow, but that the mind, no less than the heart, has to go forth to meet it; and the interpretations will vary as the minds do. In other words, it was impossible, even had it been desirable, to shut reason out. The two aspects of Protestantism, which are ultimately only one — the appeal to Scripture and the appeal to reason — find admirably concentrated illustration in a moment, which perhaps more perfectly than any other sums up the spirit of the Reformation, just as the pathos of it is summed up in the fruitless discussion over *Hoc est corpus meum* in the Schloss of Marburg. It is the historic moment when Luther replies in the "Diet of Worms" to Eck's demand for a straightforward answer to his question whether he would retract or no. "I can retract nothing," said the monk, "unless I be convinced either *from Scripture or by clear argument*." [1]

[1] Cf. Froude's second lecture on "The Times of Erasmus and Luther." "In those words lay the whole meaning of the Reforma-

Here, in one of the most tremendous moments in history, Luther deliberately co-ordinated reason with Scripture.[1] We say "deliberately"; for the great words have all the ring of a solemn confession. In later years and with growing bitterness he spoke, it is true, with contempt of reason, in language of almost incredible coarseness and vehemence. No doubt Luther had grave, not to say insoluble problems to face, such as those which gathered round the Eucharist; and the struggle sometimes provoked him to an extravagant depreciation of reason. The very intensity of his difficulty is due to the fact that he had not broken, and indeed could not break, completely with the past. But there are times when Luther treated with extreme boldness the Scripture to whose word at other times he professed to bow; and we see the man as truly at the one time as at the other. He represents in his own person the joint claims of reason and of Scripture.

How bold he was — how rational, shall we say? — in his criticism of the worth of the various books of Scripture, will hardly be believed by one accustomed to identify Protestantism with the absolute infallibility of the Bible. Every one is familiar with his opinion that the Epistle of James is an epistle of straw. His opinion of the Epistle to the Hebrews is also depreci-

tion. Were men to go on forever saying that this and that was true, because the Pope affirmed it? Or were Pope's decrees thenceforward to be tried like the words of other men — by the ordinary laws of evidence?"

[1] Doubtless Luther would never *in formal discussion* have co-ordinated the two. All the same, this great utterance is as a window through which we see into the man's real soul. On the whole question, cf. Preuss, "Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther bis zur Leipziger Disputation."

atory. He objects to the book of Revelation because of its visions and obscurity. His spirit "does not fit into" that book, because Christ is not taught in it; and to witness to him is the first duty of an apostle ("Ye shall be my witnesses"). The book of Kings, he admits, is more credible than Chronicles. What would it matter, he asks, if Moses himself did not write the Pentateuch? He thinks it probable that Jeremiah, Hosea, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes received their final form at the hands of later redactors. In spite of the superscription, he designates the Solomonic authorship of the 127th Psalm as only probable. He admits chronological difficulties and contradictions in the statements of historical fact. He concedes that we do not always hear God Himself speaking in the Old Testament. Esther might well have been outside the canon, and the first book of Maccabees within it.

If this is not criticism, what is? It is the comment of a powerful, intrepid, and original mind, upon the contents of the Biblical books; and, at first sight, it would seem to be an arbitrary comment. Perhaps, at bottom, it is arbitrary, its criterion really being that of an individual *mens sana*. But the norm which he acknowledges as determinative of his decisions is this: "I abide by the books which give me Christ clear and pure." That accounts at once for his eulogy of St. John and St. Paul, and for his depreciation of St. James. Obviously this principle cannot be so fruitful in its application to the Old Testament; but here, too, it has its place. The exceptional value of the Psalms, he tells us, lies in this, that they speak so clearly of the kingdom, death, resurrection, and

ascension of Christ. Whatever may be said of the adequacy of Luther's criterion [1] — and it certainly led him to do less than justice to some of the Biblical books — we cannot close our eyes to the fact that he criticised the Bible in the spirit of a free, not to say a bold, man. His comments reveal the instinctive temper of the Protestant. No modern scholar claims a liberty of discussion which he could not justify by the critical utterances and temper of Luther; and there is much truth in the words of Froude, that "the work of the Reformation was done when speculative opinion was declared free." [2]

Intellectual freedom was won, but at the cost of ecclesiastical unity; and as it was in the beginning of Protestantism, so it is now, and so perhaps it ever shall be. *Quot homines, tot sententiae:* hence Protestantism assumes numerous denominational forms. The Bible is not always so clear, even in its greatest statements, as to compel all thinking men to one interpretation. What then? Is liberty of thought not likely, not certain to lead to infinite subjectivity? The individual has a right to the Bible; the priest must not stand in his way. But is the individual's interpretation sure to be right? and where individuals differ, how shall we decide? The new principles of interpretation — grammatico-historical as they are now called — greatly minimized the dangers of subjectivity. The interpretation of a passage was now no longer determined by the caprice of the reader or

[1] There is a good deal to be said for Köhler's assertion that for church dogmatic Luther substitutes his own. Th. Ltztg. 11th October, 1902.

[2] Essay on "The Condition and Prospects of Protestantism."

the tradition of the Church, but by the rigorous application of the laws of language and grammar, and by the consideration of its context and purpose.[1] Still experience soon showed that this was not enough to fix the meaning of a passage beyond dispute. Neither is the union of the individual with Christ by itself sufficient. For while it will enlighten the eyes of his spirit, and enable him to behold all that essentially concerns the welfare of his soul, it does not guarantee him an infallible answer to all the problems that can be raised on the ground covered by the literature of the Bible. The very existence of various denominations is sufficient proof of that. Between Christ and many of the individual members of every denomination there exists a real and intimate union, yet that union coexists with widely different interpretations of important texts, and even with not inconsiderable doctrinal differences. The remedy for the inevitable subjectivities of an active Protestantism does not lie there. Where then does it lie?

[1] Of course it is not maintained that the historical method was practised with anything like the same consistency as it is to-day. In one sense indeed, it had hardly yet begun to be. There was practically no sense of development, and without the appreciation of that fact, the historical method could not yield its richest fruits. New Testament doctrine was found even in the earliest parts of the Old Testament. Luther remarks *e. g.* that Abimelech must have been a Christian; because God says to him "I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou hast done this," (Gen. xx. 6) and no one could act in the integrity of his heart but a Christian. In many respects, Luther's exegesis still moves along the lines of mediæval interpretation. But the spirit of freedom was born. The new principles were beginning to work; the new day of interpretation had dawned. For an interesting sketch of the principles of Luther's interpretation of the Old Testament, cf. Karl Eger, "Luther's Auslegung des Alten Testaments."

The Reformers soon became painfully conscious of the perils to which the new principles of interpretation exposed the Church; and we find both Melanchthon and Calvin suggesting a council of pious doctors, whose definitions, though they need not be infallible, might yet practically decide controverted points. However useful or even necessary such a proposal may be when the Church is face to face with the practical exigencies of a given situation; however wise and just it may be that the individual should, in points of controversy, submit his judgment to the collective piety and wisdom of those who are presumably the worthiest representatives of the Church, the proposal is yet an undoubted reversion in principle to the methods of the Romish Church, which Luther, at least, had in the most emphatic way repudiated. He had rejected the schoolmen. He had rejected the Fathers. But the unpardonable sin was that he had rejected the councils. It was this that dumbfounded the Papal delegate at Worms. "It is as clear as day," Luther maintained in his splendid vindication, "that both Pope and Councils have often erred." Eck was thunderstruck. "Do you really mean," he asked, "that a Council can have erred?" Luther "hardened himself like a hard rock," and answered that it was manifest that they had erred often. "Yes. Here stand I. I can do no other. So help me God. Amen." That was Luther's opinion of councils in the greatest moment of his life; and though such a council as Melanchthon or Calvin would have established would probably have been animated by a spirit different from that of the councils to which Luther gave such

short shrift, in principle it would have been the same. The Protestant, so long as he remains a Protestant, cannot abandon either the right or the duty of searching for himself. That does not mean that he will search alone, indifferent to the researches and results of others. He is not alone; the Spirit is with him. And he will not forget that the Spirit which is with him is also with the Church. He will keep the open ear for all that the Spirit has to say. But infallibility is no more the attribute of a council than it is of a man. An authority which aspires to command the reason and the conscience must be able to impose itself. If it cannot impose itself, it cannot, by Pope or council, be superimposed.

This, then, is the true test of Protestantism — not adherence to a creed, which necessarily shares the imperfections of all human things, but possession of a spirit; and in the possession of this spirit lies the hope of the Protestant churches in every field of their activity, whether it be criticism, preaching, evangelization, home or foreign missionary enterprise. Indeed, in the possession of this spirit lies the hope of the world, of its science and art, of its social, economic, and political progress. In the mighty words of Luther, *We must be courageous and free, and not allow the spirit of liberty to be overawed by the fabricated words of Popes.* This is the manifesto of one who was both a freedman and a free man. He knew the bitterness of bondage before he tasted the exhilaration and responsibilities of liberty. The tonic which the churches need to-day is the recovery of this intrepid faith. There are always numerous and subtle influences at

work tending to transform the Protestant spirit into the Romish spirit.[1] One of the greatest of living church historians has recently called attention to the grave phenomenon which he describes as the progressive catholicizing of the Protestant churches, a phenomenon which expresses itself not only in the increased emphasis on the liturgical side of worship and on the ecclesiastical machinery of the church, but in other and subtler ways. As it attempts to bind to forms of worship, so it attempts to bind to forms of thought. It is in both directions a repression of the liberty and spontaneity which are inseparable from true Protestantism. Protestantism, he assures us, is not flourishing as the Protestant churches are; and he expresses the fear that these churches may become "the mere double of Catholicism."[2] A church which is not willing to welcome new facts, if they be facts; a church which is not able to respond to new truth, from whatever quarter it comes; a church which binds old forms of truth upon the consciences of men, or refuses to accommodate the truth which they embodied to contemporary modes of thought: such a church, though she will hardly allure within her walls profound and reverent thinkers who stand outside her, may yet be able to do something for others, and especially the more emotional sort of men. But she cannot call herself a Protestant church.

Against the spirit of true Protestantism within the Protestant churches, the subtlest and most attractive

[1] For some trenchant remarks on existing anomalies in the Protestant attitude to authority, cf. G. A. Coe, "The Religion of a Mature Mind," pp. 82–94.

[2] Harnack: "Thoughts on Protestantism," pp. 32–46.

influences are arrayed. The glamour of an elaborate ritual, the imposing authority of the past, are not the most helpful allies of intellectual and spiritual liberty. There are Popes in other churches than the Church of Rome — influences that make for the repression of the spontaneous life of the mind and spirit; and Luther's brave words are as needful to-day as ever. "We must not allow the spirit of liberty to be overawed by the fabricated words of Popes." Protestantism has its traditions and theological systems just as Catholicism has; and, in their own way, they can work as fatally. Every church, like every age, has to readjust itself to truth. The truth itself does not change. But the form of it does; the age's perception of it does. And if the form does not keep pace with the changing perception, due among other things, to truer methods and advancing knowledge, then it becomes a form

"Through which the spirit breathes no more."

The form is stiff, and the spirit is gone.

It is at once the necessity and the misfortune of a great and original age like the Reformation to embody the spirit which created it in institutions and systems. The spirit craves, nay, compels expression. But, while the spirit is immortal, the body is not; and the pathos of church history has just been the general inability to distinguish between the mortal body and the immortal spirit. The spirit of the Reformation translated itself into theologies, which, like all translations, did less than justice to the original. Those theologies hardened into scholastic

forms which did less and less justice to the original impulse of the Reformation; and the intellectual salvation of the church lies in continuing to work in the spirit of the original impulse, not of the scholasticism which it created.[1] Both for good and for evil, the conservative instinct lies deep in the natures of men. In religion, this instinct has worked largely, but by no means exclusively, for good. This it was that slew the prophets and that nailed Christ to His cross; but it is this, too, which has enabled men to withstand the encroachments of insidious innovations, and to preserve many of the fundamental elements in religion which might have disappeared, had the ears been too readily open to the plausible suggestions of every new comer. But in spite of the great soul of good at the heart of it, it has in many of its phases, been an obstacle to progress. It has kept men standing, when they should have been moving on. It has often made them ungenerous and unjust to other men who loved truth as they loved their lives. Men of purely conservative instincts repose comfortably in traditions and beliefs which have existed long simply because they were never challenged; and they angrily resent the challenge when it comes, forgetting that they call themselves Protestants, only because they are children of fathers who were not afraid to challenge all that offended their divine instinct for truth.

In the Reformation, we must not forget the Renais-

[1] Cf. Froude's essay on "Criticism and the Gospel History": "Of all positions the most fatally suicidal for Protestants to occupy is the assumption, which it is competent for Roman Catholics to hold, but not for them, that beliefs once sanctioned by the Church are sacred, and that to impugn them is not error, but crime."

sance.[1] It was an epoch of advancing knowledge as well as of courageous faith. The facts of classical antiquity revealed a new world of profound fascination and of throbbing humanity, which put to confusion the unrealities that the mediæval church had only too successfully imposed upon the spirits of men. The Renaissance was the re-discovery of man and the world: the Reformation was the re-discovery of God. And that re-discovery of Him was, in part, the discovery of Him in the life of ancient humanity, or, in more definite language, in the historical movements and experiences reflected in the Bible. It was surely part of the gracious Providence of God that the recovery of the idea of humanity should be accompanied by the perception that humanity was the theatre of the divine activity, that God was not a being apart, but one who communes with men and governs history. The Bible had been a book of the doctrines of salvation: it now became the record of the history of salvation. The divine life and love were seen in their living relations to humanity; and that is one of the truths which it is the function of the Protestant churches to keep before themselves and the world. Wherever it has been forgotten, its neglect has been fearfully avenged. Deism tore the heart out of religion, by relegating God to a distant throne. The issue was desolation and death. The nineteenth cen-

[1] Harnack strikingly shows, however, that the Renaissance, important as it was, would never by itself and without the Reformation have created the modern world, as it was essentially a reversion to the past, "a resuscitation of antiquity" ("Martin Luther in seiner Bedeutung, etc.," pp. 10, 11, 23).

tury has seen the idea of humanity, which received so lurid an emphasis in the horrors of the French Revolution, again interpenetrated by a sense of divinity — partly in consequence of a dominant philosophy which has profoundly affected modern thought, and partly through the revived historical study of the Bible. And now, not merely because humanity is interesting, but because within it the operations of divine law are manifest, and upon the field of its history the divine purpose is worked out, the theological scholar no less than the historian may say, *Humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

It is quite impossible that the spirit of the Reformation should ever be wholly lost. Whether there are signs, as Harnack supposes, that it is vanishing from the Protestant churches or not, of one thing we may be quite sure — that it is not vanishing from the world. It is inspiring investigation in every department of science to-day. A Galileo is free to-day to propound any theory which he can commend to the reason of those who will listen to him. There is very much Biblical study, too, which is essentially Protestant in spirit. The Biblical criticism of to-day, when it is real criticism, and does not assume the thing to be proved, is the direct outcome of the Reformation spirit, working with the more scientific methods, and the ever-enlarging material of our own age. The reverent critics are the lineal descendants of the Reformers. Criticism is not an isolated phenomenon which can be located and controlled by those who fear it. It is part of a universal movement, affecting every department of human thought — a movement which will continue

so long as the world is full of problems and mystery, and men have minds to think.

The Reformation taught the world fearlessly to investigate all current beliefs, and to welcome new truths as a source of strength. Hard heads need sound knocks, said Luther; and sound enough were the knocks which he and his brother reformers dealt at some of the traditions and practices which could not substantiate their claims on any better ground than that of antiquity. The Reformation gave an enormous impulse to the respect for facts, and to the earnestness of the search for them. That was an age of discovery. Brave and adventurous spirits worked hard and travelled far. They crossed oceans. They touched undreamt-of continents. They explored antiquity. They recreated theology. They stood upon the threshold of scientific discovery. The old world was passing. New worlds of absorbing interest were breaking upon their vision. All the facts that they could offer were welcome; but everything which claimed to be believed must be able to bear the light. If it could not stand to be criticised, it could not stand to be trusted. So the quest went on from year to year, suffering continual checks, but making continual progress. Every traditional opinion was put on its defence; and the Bible could claim no exemption. Even Luther, as we saw, had boldly challenged traditional belief as to the authorship and value of certain of its books; and the challenge was bound to be repeated, wherever men felt the impulse of the Reformation.

No mistake could be profounder than to suppose that higher criticism, which is only another name for

literary or historical criticism, is a thing of yesterday. In its spirit, it is as old as Luther, and older ;[1] but, even in something like its present form, it is a century and a half old. It is exactly a hundred and fifty years ago since what may be called the documentary theory was devised to meet some of the more notorious difficulties of the book of Genesis ; and that theory, doubtless with important supplements and modifications, holds the field to-day, and is accepted by many who count themselves the opponents of criticism. It is not without interest that Astruc, who first started the theory, was a Roman Catholic.[2] The impulse given to intellectual liberty by the Reformation had been powerful enough to compel at least a spasmodic response from the more original minds even in the Church of Rome. Just as there are men of the Roman Catholic spirit in Protestant communions, so there are men of Protestant temper in the Romish Church, such as Astruc in the eighteenth century, and Loisy to-day, though the incubus of the Church is too heavy to allow their thinking to attain clear consistency. It is not possible to maintain that Astruc's theory was devised in the interests of unbelief. The title of his book[3] shows that, though he believed that there were documents lying behind Genesis, he also believed that the book had received its present form at the hands

[1] See the references to the interpretation of Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–429 A. D.) on p. 104.

[2] Cf. Julia Wedgwood, — "The Message of Israel," p. 53. "Biblical criticism was born under the shadow of a liberal Romanism ; it has been matured in the home of Protestantism."

[3] Conjectures sur les Mémoires originaux dont il paroit que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Génèse.

of Moses. The problems raised by the phenomena of Genesis press themselves upon the minds of all who read with the desire to understand.

This is only one of numberless problems created by the facts of Biblical literature; it is the genius of Protestantism to do what it can to find an answer for them. It may not always succeed, but it is bound to try; and in the attempt it will at least learn the limitations within which it has to work. Biblical criticism does not stand alone. It is part of the intellectual life of the age; and the one can no more stop than the other. Wherever there is a problem, there is something upon which the Protestant mind must work — whether that problem be in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the Scriptures by which men live. All scientific investigation is impelled by the desire to know, and the investigation of the Bible is governed by this impulse among others. For others there assuredly are: the Bible will only utter its deepest secret to those who fear the Lord, and who desire, through it, to enter into fellowship with Him. The impulse to the highest study of the Bible will be the desire to have true religion increased within us. But besides this impulse, the science of Biblical study shares with all other sciences the desire to know and understand, by patient investigation of all the available facts. Biblical criticism is but one phase of that great intellectual movement, essentially Protestant in origin and impulse, in which every thinking man, and, above all, every scientific student, must humbly play his part. Truth has many forms; one man studies it under one aspect, another under another.

But there is one God over all, and all truth is ultimately related to Him. The search for it must be undertaken in the reverent, yet fearless spirit of Him who was Truth incarnate; and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

CHAPTER VIII

CRITICISM AND CHRIST

No part of the discussion needs to be approached with more reverence or with more delicate consideration of the feelings of others than this. Any theory which would flippantly set aside a solemn decision of Christ on any question, even were it purely literary or historical, would stand self-condemned. This, then, in brief, is the problem: Has Christ anywhere given a deliberate decision on such questions? The question is not, Did He hold certain opinions on these matters? but, Are these opinions which He held, organic and necessary to His spiritual teaching? Did He lay them emphatically upon the consciences of those whom He sought to bring to God? Were they essential or incidental?

Nothing has so distressed and disappointed the opponents of the critical view of the Old Testament as its apparent disregard of the testimony of Christ. To them it seems that Christ has plainly and deliberately endorsed their own views of the Old Testament, and implicitly condemned in advance the views of the critics. One can have nothing but respect for the jealousy with which they safeguard the honor of Christ, and the enthusiasm with which they combat belittling views of His person. But it must be noted,

on the other side, that most of the critics are animated by precisely the same motives. No doubt it will not seem so to their opponents. But one has only to read such a statement of the case for criticism as is presented by Professor Meinhold's "Jesus and the Old Testament" to see that this is the case. The critics are contending for what they hold to be a worthier conception of Christ's person than that which the traditional theory offers them. They do not believe that the Christ whose truth makes men free, would bind in advance the intellectual conscience of unborn generations and wrap up faith in Himself with issues that are wholly irrelevant to the spiritual life. We may assume, indeed we know, that many men on both sides love the truth, and would scorn any solution which would be dishonoring to Christ.

Is the discussion of Old Testament problems foreclosed by statements in the New Testament, or is it not? That is the real point at issue; and the opponents of criticism answer with no uncertain sound. Referring to a statement of Dr. McCurdy's[1] that "there is really no biblical tradition to the effect that David was a psalm-writer, the titles to the Psalms being unauthentic," a reviewer remarks, "We do not know what he calls the New Testament, or what he would say of Christ and the apostles, who repeatedly affirmed that some of the Psalms were written by David, and based their argument upon the fact of his authorship."[2] Again, we are told by another writer that "the authority of the Psalter depends

[1] "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," vol. iii. p. 52.
[2] "Bibliotheca Sacra," January, 1902, p. 204.

upon the testimony of the New Testament."[1] Now the New Testament has a very distinct function; but it seems to be no part of that function to give its readers information on literary problems arising out of the Old Testament. It nowhere claims that right for itself, and if any man makes such a claim for it he must be prepared to justify his claim. He must show that it was part of the purpose of the writers of the New Testament to correct traditional views of authorship and history, if those views were mistaken. Further, he must show that they had access to information which would enable them to correct those views; or, in the absence of such information, he must show that they were miraculously led to a knowledge of such matters. Till these claims can be substantiated, the New Testament endorsement of a tradition, say, as to the Mosaic authorship of the law, or the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, can have no more value than the tradition itself; and that must be independently investigated. There need be no reason for alarm at such a conclusion, unless it can be shown that these questions are integrally bound up with the spiritual function of Scripture.

What, then, is that function? It is defined in the famous text, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which

[1] Dr. T. W. Chambers in Munhall's "Anti-Higher Criticism," p. 144. Paley, however, in his "Evidences," more than a hundred years ago, frankly admitted that "a reference in the New Testament to a passage in the Old does not so fix its authority as to exclude all inquiry into its credibility, or into the separate reasons upon which that credibility is founded."

is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

Now whatever be the translation of the much-disputed sixteenth verse, it ought never to have been used to silence the discussion of literary problems. If we translate with the Authorized Version, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, etc., we shall have in the first place to determine the original compass of Scripture; and that is a notoriously hard question. For eight or nine passages, which are not found in the Old Testament, are quoted in the New — though not by our Lord — apparently as Scripture; and again, though Christ does not quote the Apocrypha, there are also books in the Old Testament itself which He does not quote, *e.g.* Esther, the Song, Ecclesiastes. Thus, to begin with, the Scripture of which inspiration is predicated, though no doubt practically synonymous with our Old Testament, is yet not specifically defined. The other translation of the passage would at least seem to leave the question of the limits of Scripture still more open. But on either view, the verse contains valuable suggestions as to the nature of Inspiration. Every inspired Scripture is useful within the sphere specified. Surely no one doubts that. But that is all that the verse directly says. It has nothing to say of inerrancy, nothing of infallibility. If anything more is to be read into the word "inspired," that must be discovered by an inductive examination of Scripture itself. The ethical and religious function of Scripture is pointedly indicated in the following verse, which is too often dissociated from verse 16:

That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. If Scripture is found to be useful for the purposes indicated, if it can make the man of God complete, and furnish him completely unto every good work, then it has fulfilled its function, and that irrespective of the accuracy or inaccuracy of traditional views of authorship which have come in the course of the centuries to be associated with it. We must distinguish between the things that affect faith and life, and other things which, however interesting and important of themselves, are for this purpose irrelevant — powerless to furnish us unto good works.

This great text of St. Paul, then, does not even pretend to block the way of a scientific investigation of the problems raised by the Old Testament. The literary problems of the Old Testament must be discussed on the ground of the Old Testament. To look for the solution of such problems in the New Testament is to mistake altogether its spirit and purpose. How much we should be perplexed by starting from the New Testament in our investigation of the Old we shall readily see if we consider the inaccuracy of some of the allusions to the Old Testament in the New. The number of those who perished, for example, as the result of the idolatrous connection of Israel with Moab is given in Num. xxv. 9 as twenty-four thousand: St. Paul puts it at twenty-three thousand (1 Cor. x. 8). The priest who gave David the consecrated bread bears in the Old Testament the name of Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxi. 1); in the New he is called Abiathar (Mark ii. 26). In the Old Testament,

the famine which fell upon Israel during the reign of Ahab lasted three years (1 Kings xviii. 1); in the New Testament, three years and a half (Luke iv. 25; James v. 17). Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada (2 Chr. xxiv. 20), is spoken of as the son of Barachiah (Matt. xxiii. 35), by a not unnatural confusion [1] with the more famous prophet (Zech. i. 1). Doubtless these and similar discrepancies which might be mentioned are exceedingly trivial, and, to any one who realizes that the Bible is a spiritual revelation intended to strengthen and equip the man of God, not in the least disconcerting; but it is necessary to call attention to such things when it is claimed that the New Testament utterances concerning the Old Testament are to be taken as in all respects authoritative.

A much more delicate question than that involved in the allusions to the Old Testament is the New Testament interpretation of the Old. Let us glance at two of the more striking instances. From the use of the singular word "seed" instead of the plural "seeds" in the promise made to Abraham "and to his seed," St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians (iii. 16), argues that the original word contemplated an individual, and that individual is Christ. There can be no manner of question about the sincerity of this logic of St. Paul, or even about the substantial accuracy of his conclusion; but, unless we waive all claim to examine Biblical words by the ordinary laws of language, the process by which Paul reaches this conclusion must fail to convince an open Western

[1] The mistake may be that of the evangelist or of a copyist; but it is enough to show that our present text of the New Testament is not always in harmony with the Old Testament, even in matters of fact.

mind to-day. The word "seed," in English, in Hebrew, or in Greek, is a collective word; and while it may be, and occasionally — though seldom — is, applied to an individual, it is never inevitably so applied, and no argument can be built upon it. For suppose for a moment that the promise contemplated, as most scholars would claim that it originally did, not one individual, but many[1] — that it is for Abraham and his posterity — are we to suppose that in that case the plural word "seeds" would have been used? That would be as awkward and impossible in Hebrew or Greek as it is in English. It is not denied that the promise receives its ideal or perfect fulfilment in Christ; that is a fact which does not depend on any dialectic process. What is denied is that the use of the singular word necessitates the individual interpretation. There was a time when this could be accepted as an argument. It no doubt carried weight with those for whom Paul intended it. He was too shrewd a man, too keen-sighted and intense in his zeal for converts, to offer them irrelevant or vulnerable logic. But we cannot to-day, with our different type of mind, feel the cogency of the argument; we cannot admit that it is the natural and inevitable interpretation of the passage.

Or take the well-known passage in which St. Paul is arguing that the minister of the gospel deserves to be supported by those to whom he ministers.[2] He supports the argument by a quotation from the law: *It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle*

[1] Paul himself so interprets it in Gal. iii. 29 and Rom. iv. 16.
[2] 1 Cor. ix. 7 ff. Cf. 1 Tim. v. 18.

the ox when he treadeth out the corn. The quotation is an admirable illustration of the point he is enforcing; but he goes on to say, *Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written.* Paul rejects, and almost resents the idea, that such legislation should mean what it says. In the interests of what he regards as a worthier conception of revelation, he allegorizes and thus dissipates the magnificent and tender generosity of the law in its original application. To his question, "Is it for the oxen that God careth?" our answer must be, "Most assuredly." The Deuteronomic legislation is inspired not only by a noble love for God, but by a no less worthy love for man *and for the animals.* One of the distinctions of the Old Testament is its profound and beautiful interest in the animal creation. The animals often appear in the prophetic visions of the latter days; and God was willing to spare Nineveh, "that great city; wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; *and also much cattle*" (Jonah iv. 11). Can we, in the light of all these facts, conscientiously say that Paul's interpretation of that passage is normative for us? Is it not rather in the spirit of Philo[1] who interprets allegorically the law that a garment taken in pledge must be restored before sunset, because God did not care for such things? Unless we are to abandon the principle that the Bible means what it says, there can be only one

[1] "De Somn." i. 16, 17. The garment signifies speech. To suppose that the law in Ex. xxii. 26 really referred to garments would be "to impart the triviality of human affairs to the uncreate and immortal nature of God."

natural interpretation of the law that dealt so generously with the oxen; and that law, as it stands, is sufficiently divine to be able to dispense with allegorical interpretation.[1]

The allegorical interpretation is found in other parts of the New Testament, and is expressly acknowledged by St. Paul in Gal. iv. 24, "Which things contain an allegory; for these women are two covenants;" and in 1 Cor. x. 11 the incidents of the wilderness wanderings are said to have happened *typikōs*, typically, by way of figure. The meat and the drink which sustained them in the desert are spiritualized, and the rock of which they drank was Christ. It would take us too far out of our way to trace the origin and purpose of allegorical interpretation, and to show its relative justification for that day. It is enough here to say that, so long as we believe in the grammatico-historical principles of interpretation won for us by the Reformation, though not adopted with uniform consistency by the Reformers, the allegorical method can never be ours. Be it said, however, once for all, that not one of these points — whether arguments which do not now convince or allegory which does not now commend itself to the historical sense — is of vital importance to the Christian faith, or impairs by one jot the power of Scripture to edify or reprove, to correct, instruct, or inspire. If the essential aim of Scrip-

[1] Jennings and Lowe ("The Psalms," vol. i. p. xxvii) defend the passage thus: "All that is meant is, that the moral Law — which is to guide the Christian as well as the Jew — prescribes humanity, and liberal recognition of service, even in the case of brute beasts, *à fortiori* then in the case of men." Doubtless this is what is ultimately meant, but it is not precisely what Paul says.

ture, as defined by St. Paul, be steadily kept in view, all these things will fall into their proper place as matters of very subordinate importance. It is a grave error to confound the soul of a man's message with his particular presentation of it, or to confuse the heavenly treasure with the earthly vessel.

Let us now pass, however, from the New Testament in general to a more particular study of the attitude of Christ to the Old Testament. In one who believed that God cared for every sheep, and for every sparrow that falls to the ground, we do not expect, and we do not find, any such interpretation of the Old Testament as that which St. Paul gives of the divine law of kindness to animals. Every utterance of Christ is marked by a sweet and convincing reasonableness. He is the Rabbi, yet there was nothing Rabbinical in Him, and we reverently approach the consideration of His words with the assurance that He spoke with authority. With that authority He partly confirmed, partly modified, and partly abolished the older covenant. He came to fulfil, and He urged the people to do all that they were bidden by those who sat on Moses' seat; but He also abrogated the law of retaliation and rebuked two of His disciples for their too ready imitation of an ancient prophet.[1] The sovereign yet reverent freedom of His attitude to the Old Testament lends a peculiar interest to His numerous direct and indirect allusions to it.

Some of the references are of a large kind, others

[1] Luke ix. 55. The words of the rebuke, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*, are not found in most of the best manuscripts; but the fact of the rebuke is enough for our purpose.

are more minute. More than once we read that He showed them that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law and the prophets and the psalms concerning Him. "These," that is, the Old Testament Scriptures, "are they which testify of me." "Moses wrote of me," etc. What we should very much like to possess, and what we seldom find upon His own lips, is a direct reference to actual passages in the law, the prophets, and the psalms concerning Him. This is no doubt in part made good by the Book of Acts, which repeatedly emphasizes particular passages of Old Testament Scripture. But what would we not give to possess the very words in which our Lord opened up the Scriptures to His disciples? In the largest sense, He regarded Himself as fulfilling the law and the prophets: they without Him could not be made perfect. He fulfilled them by embodying their inmost spirit. He loved them because they "hung upon love." The love that they expressed He came to be. He gave shape to their suggestions. He elicited their inmost spirit. He said what they had struggled and meant to say. He completed what they had begun. He is the fulfilment of their purest and most passionate hopes.

And all this in the largest sense. Hardly ever does there fall from His own lips such an Old Testament reference to the definite details of His life as has so often formed the staple of the Messianic argument. When He does connect a definite passage with Himself, when, for example, in the Nazareth synagogue, He claimed that the great prophecy in Isaiah lxi. was fulfilled that day in Himself, it is, we find, a passage

which illustrates the spirit and character of the Messiah, and not the detailed incidents of His life. It was not on the fact that He was born in this place or that, or belonged to this tribe or that, that He based His claims to Messiahship; but on the fact that He was one who had a message of good tidings for the poor, one whose task was to proclaim release to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the bruised — in general, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. To follow out this line of argument would lead to an elaborate discussion of Messianic prophecy, and this is aside from our immediate purpose. But it is important to note that Christ regards Himself as fulfilling the Old Testament rather in its general spirit than in its particular detail. His comparative indifference to the detail which Messianic prophecy has for centuries loved to emphasize lifts us above externalities to a larger view of the Old Testament as a great and impressive religious unity, the meaning of which became fully clear only when it gathered upon Himself.

Another instructive feature in the references of Christ to the Old Testament is that, though He regards the whole as a real unity, certain books within that unity seem to interest Him much more than others — so far, that is, as we can judge from the quotations. More than two-thirds of all His citations from the Old Testament come from four books alone: Exodus, Deuteronomy, the Psalter, and Isaiah. It was in these books that He found a spirit most nearly akin to His own, and this must be taken into account in any estimate of His attitude to the Old Testament. It is surely no accident that in His temptation it is

three mighty words of Deuteronomy that rise to His lips — large words, the truth of which appeals to every religious soul.[1] In the words of Exodus He institutes the supper which is to commemorate His death for all time; by an appeal to that book he justified the faith in immortality. In words from the Book of Isaiah He opens and vindicates His ministry; and in the words of a Psalm He commends His spirit into the hands of His Father.

But while Christ could contemplate the Old Testament as a whole, and while within that whole He had his favorite books, He was familiar with all its detail, and for purposes of illustration, argument, and appeal He referred to it again and again. He alludes, directly or indirectly, to the creation of man, male and female, the divine institutions of marriage and the Sabbath, the murder of Abel by Cain, the times of Noah and the flood, the patriarchs, especially father Abraham, the twelve tribes of Israel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah together with Lot's wife, Jacob's ladder, the burning bush, incidents of the wilderness wandering, such as the giving of manna and the raising of the serpent, David's eating of the shewbread, the splendor and wisdom of Solomon, the queen of Sheba, the drought of Elijah's time, the widow of Zarephath, the cure of Naaman by Elisha, the story of Jonah. Besides these historical references are others to the legislation — to the law of leprosy, for example, which is ascribed to Moses; and indeed language is

[1] "Man shall not live by bread alone." "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

used which may be not unfairly construed as suggesting that Moses is the author of the whole Pentateuch. Besides the definite phrase in John (v. 46), *Moses wrote of me*,[1] we occasionally meet with the combination *Moses and the prophets* (Luke xvi. 29, 31), in which Moses stands for the Pentateuch.

Now there can be practically no doubt that Christ believed in the historicity of all the incidents to which He alluded, as well as in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, if not also in the Davidic authorship of the Psalms. Doubtless it is abstractly possible to maintain that He really held other views — knew, for example, that the Pentateuch was composite, and that some of the incidents He alluded to were not strictly historical — but that He accepted and expressed the common view in accommodation to contemporary opinion. But besides the suggestion of trimming which would attach to a Christ who was thus divided in His own mind, it can hardly be maintained that that is the natural impression made by His words. *As it was in the days of Noah, even so shall it be. Remember Lot's wife.* The power of such statements and appeals depends largely on a real conviction, on the part of speaker and hearer alike, of the historical reality of the incidents alluded to. This much it seems imperative to concede. Now arises the question, Does this concession necessarily stamp the incidents as historic? Does Christ's incidental endorsement of such incidents and ascriptions of author-

[1] The analogy of Acts iii. 22; vii. 37 (cf. John vi. 14; vii. 40), might be urged as indicating that the reference here is only or particularly to Deut. xviii. 18; so that this, strictly speaking, might imply no more than the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy.

ship foreclose scientific investigation? It is here that the two schools of interpretation part company, the one maintaining that the question is still open, the other that loyalty to Christ leaves only one course possible.

Let us look first at the question of authorship. It is in all probability only an accident that the two passages from Isaiah which Christ cites with comparative fulness[1] are passages whose genuineness is not contested by modern scholarship. There can be little doubt that He, in common with His contemporaries, would have cited with equal readiness, as Isaiah's, a passage from the latter part of the prophecy. But what we cannot too strongly accentuate is this, that the truth of a prophecy does not stand or fall with the accuracy or inaccuracy of the traditional ascription, nor is the authority of Christ in any way compromised by adopting such an ascription. When the Book of the Prophet Isaiah was given Him in the synagogue of Nazareth, He claimed that the passage which He read from it was that day fulfilled in Himself. Now, is it not clear as noonday that that claim is justified, whatever be the literary origin of the prophecy? Both the truth of the prophecy and the authority of Christ — which are spiritual things — remain unaffected by that consideration. The ideal there enunciated — for it is an ideal rather than a prediction — becomes a reality in Him. Whether it be an utterance of Isaiah the son of Amoz, or of an exilic prophet in Babylon, or even of a post-exilic prophet, the prophecy assuredly found its fulfilment in Him; and it

[1] Is. vi. 9 f. (Matt. xiii. 14 f.); Is. xxix. 13 (Matt. xv. 7 f.).

is quite beside the point to adduce such a passage to decide the literary question of the authorship, a question which at that time had never been raised, and which in any case is quite irrelevant to the spiritual purpose for which the passage is quoted.

It has been too much the fashion to confuse authorship with authority. Disproof, if it were forthcoming, of the traditional view of the authorship of a book would not in any sense invalidate its message, if it have any. Whatever real authority it has, is inherent. It is not essentially strengthened, if it comes to us under the cover of a great name; nor is it essentially weakened if it come to us anonymously, nor even if it be ascribed to a wrong source. If any one were now-a-days to quote as Milton's, *Conscience does make cowards of us all*, we should not dispute the truth of the quotation, but the error of the ascription. How little importance was attached to the question of authorship we can see by examining the citations from the Old Testament in the New. Out of nearly two hundred and eighty-six express quotations, only in fifty-one cases, less than a fifth, is a personal name connected with the quotation. This proves — what ought to need no proof — that the truth was felt to be its own witness, and that, though it was often associated with the name of a particular man, it did not depend for its worth or power on that association. It is interesting to note how often Christ, in quoting from the Pentateuch, omits all reference to Moses; as, for example, in the words with which He repelled the temptation. In such case the omission is no loss, nor would the addition be a gain. The ascription is in no case the important thing.

This will be the more clear, if we remember how large a tract of the Old Testament is anonymous. To begin with, all the historical books except Nehemiah, that is, nearly half of the Old Testament. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory* would be a not inappropriate motto for the literary men of Israel. Their God was their glory, and many of the greatest of them were content to be forgotten.

> *Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei*
> *Vitabit Libitinam —*

this proud self-consciousness, at least within the literary sphere, is alien to the Hebrew spirit; so that the anonymity of so large a portion of the Old Testament need occasion no surprise. But it ought to put us on our guard against unduly accentuating the fact of reputed authorship. Even if the authorship be disproved, the authority would not vanish. If it were proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that Isaiah lxi. is post-exilic, it would not in the faintest degree mar the splendor of the original prophecy, or the wonder and certainty of its fulfilment in Christ.

While Moses is often synonymous with the law, and no doubt, in Christ's time, was regarded as its author no less than its hero, two things have to be remembered: (i) that the literary question of authorship had not yet been raised, and that therefore the popular nomenclature has only the value of an unproved tradition;[1] and (ii) there are hints enough

[1] Even the conservative Delitzsch, in his "New Commentary on Genesis," could say, "Our Lord and His apostles conceive of the Thorah

scattered all over the Gospels, that the human authorship of the books is a matter of comparative indifference. They are a word of God; that is of more importance than that they are the words of some particular man. A prophetic word is often referred to simply as the word that was spoken *by the Lord through the prophet* (Matt. i. 22; ii. 15). Who the prophet was is, comparatively speaking, immaterial. Even when his name is wrongly given, as it is by Matthew[1] when he refers a prophecy of Zechariah's to Jeremiah, it is still a word of the Lord, and, as such, stands fast. It is particularly instructive to compare the statements of the synoptists in their accounts of the same incident. In Matthew's account[2] of Christ's answer to the challenge of the Scribes and Pharisees for transgressing the traditions of the elders, we read: *God said, Honor thy father and thy mother;* Mark[3] gives His words as, *Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother.* It will hardly be maintained that Christ used both expressions; we are therefore left to the conclusion that, in the eyes of the evangelists, the Mosaic authorship of the words — doubtless believed in by both — is an unimportant matter. One of them ignores it; what is of importance is that the fifth commandment is a word of God. When we read both that Moses said and God said, our attention is at once directed not to the man who spoke, but to the divine word spoken.

as might be expected of them as members of their nation: it is to them the work of Moses; . . . but historico-critical investigation as to his share as author in the composition of the Pentateuch is left free, as far as New Testament statements are concerned."

[1] xxvii. 9. [2] xv. 4. [3] vii. 10.

Still more significant are the three accounts of the reply of Jesus to the challenge of the Sadducees. The words of Luke[1] run thus:

That the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in (the place concerning) the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

In Mark[2] we read:

Have ye not read in the book of Moses, in (the place concerning) the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

According to Matthew:[3]

Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, etc.

Here, as in the previous citation from Matthew, the name of Moses is omitted: the only thing of real importance is that the great word with which Christ puts the Sadducees to shame was a word of God. It is also highly interesting and significant that Matthew quotes the words as "spoken *unto you* by God;" the New Testament writers regard the Old Testament as a book fitted and intended to edify subsequent generations. The phrase in Mark suggests that the book was regarded as written by Moses. Possibly, too, this is the meaning of the phrase in Luke. The looseness, however, of Luke's allusion is very obvious; the word which in Exodus iii. 6, followed by Matthew and Mark, is spoken by God, is here represented as spoken *by*

[1] xx. 37. [2] xii. 26. [3] xxii. 31.

Moses. These discrepancies, as we have often said, do not touch the heart of the matter; they are only perplexing to one who approaches the Bible with preconceived ideas of what it must be, and expects from it what it does not pretend to offer. Indeed the discrepancies are incidentally of great value, suggesting, as they do, that we are at liberty to emphasize only that common element in which they all agree. Even if the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch were absolutely disproved, it would not in the slightest affect Matthew's account of the scene, nor would it essentially affect either of the other two accounts. The omission of the human authorship by one writer shows that it is in no case important. Besides, the name of Moses is often nothing but a convenient designation for the Pentateuch; it is undoubtedly so in the words of Paul, "Whensoever *Moses* is read, a veil lieth upon their heart" (2 Cor. iii. 15).

It is quite clear that the name of a man may be used for convenience' sake to designate a book. Samuel is represented by St. Peter[1] as foretelling the Messianic days. Now the reference here must be to a prophecy of Nathan, as no such word appears anywhere upon the lips of Samuel. Besides, Samuel could not have written, at any rate, the whole of the books that go by his name — though there is a Talmudic tradition to that effect — because they contain an account of his death. We must conclude, then, that the name "Samuel" is simply a convenient designation for the book, and leaves the question of authorship completely open. Similarly, David is used as

[1] Acts iii. 24.

synonymous with the Psalter. A Psalm[1] which is not ascribed to him in the Hebrew text is quoted by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews[2] as in "David." Here are two undoubted cases in which the name of a man is used to designate a book, without any necessary implication that the man wrote the book: in the latter case, there is no proof at all in our only authoritative source, that is, the Hebrew text of the Psalter; and in the former case the thing is impossible. There is, then, every probability that the name of Moses was similarly used to cover the Pentateuch. As all that was written in the books of Samuel could be ascribed to Samuel, and as any Psalm might be ascribed to David, so any part of the Pentateuch could be ascribed to Moses, as he was the central figure of its history and the source of its legislation. Doubtless in his case there was a very strong tradition to the effect that he also wrote it — a tradition which has some slender support in isolated statements of the Pentateuch itself. But it is no more than a tradition, which has to be examined; and even if it were refuted, it would not affect any New Testament allusion. It would be as true, in the sense explained, to say "Moses wrote of me," as to say "Samuel told of these days."

The Pentateuch makes no claim anywhere to be from the hand of Moses. On five or six occasions he is said to have written or to have been commanded to write something: the war with Amalek (Ex. xvii. 14), the book of the covenant (Ex. xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 27), the itinerary (Num. xxxiii. 2), a song

[1] xcv. [2] iv. 7.

(Deut. xxxi. 22), and the words of the law (Deut. xxxi. 9, 24) — a phrase which has very often been interpreted to refer to the Book of Deuteronomy at least; but the very same phrase is used elsewhere[1] in a context where it can only refer to a small nucleus of the law — possibly the Ten Commandments — at any rate, brief enough to be engraved on the stones which were to be set up when the people crossed the Jordan. These references to the literary activity of Moses are valuable and interesting; but they are a long way from proving that he wrote the Pentateuch. Rather the explicit statement that he did write those things suggest that he did not write the rest; else why should these be specially singled out? And this, be it remembered, is the testimony of our oldest source. It is easy to see, of course, how the fact that the law was derived from him should in course of time have given rise to the idea that it had been written by him, especially as an important part of it was expressly claimed for him.

It is a familiar fact that, once a book has been known for some time by a certain name, it often retains that name with astonishing tenacity, even when its right to it has been satisfactorily and completely disproved. The Apostles' Creed will probably be known by this name to the end of time, though we now know that the apostles had nothing to do with the framing of it.[2] Even if the Petrine authorship of the Second Epistle of Peter were conclusively disproved, we should in all probability still continue to call it, at any rate

[1] Deut. xxvii. 3.

[2] Cf. McGiffert, "The Apostles' Creed," pp. 27–30.

for popular purposes, by its familiar name. It is truly astonishing to find that in the English edition of the Revised Version of the New Testament the Epistle to the Hebrews is entitled the Epistle *of Paul the Apostle* to the Hebrews; and that although the best New Testament scholars were working on the Revision and there is a practically unanimous consensus of New Testament scholarship for rejecting the Pauline authorship. It is no less astonishing to find German writers, such as Kautzsch and Meinhold, who have not only discarded the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but argued against it, still retaining the ordinary German names for its various books — Genesis as the first book of Moses, and so on. This should surely be enough to prove that no argument can be founded upon a name. Tradition dies hard; and, once a book has found a convenient designation, it is likely to retain it, in spite of all disproof of its historical propriety.

After this general discussion it may be well to look more particularly at three passages which have played an important part in the consideration of Christ's attitude to the Old Testament: His reference to Jonah, to the 110th Psalm, and to Exodus iii. 6, with its argument for immortality. The peculiar nature of His allusion to the book of Jonah has been held to prove that He regarded the much debated incident of that book as an historical reality. Possibly He did; there is no proof that He did not. But the charm and the educative power of Christ's allusion to the story lies partly in this, that He lays no stress on that aspect of it. It is in the larger issues of the book that He is interested. The "sign" that appealed to Him most

powerfully was not the sea-monster, but the conversion of men. "No sign shall be given you," He tells the adulterous generation, "but the sign of the prophet Jonah." Now what was that sign? That, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, so the Son of man should be three days and three nights in the bosom of the earth? That is simply impossible: firstly, because Christ was *not* three days and three nights in the earth, but only one full day and two nights. We may indeed, considering the ancient way of reckoning the two extreme days, speak of Him as having been three days and two nights in the earth, but in no case three days and three nights. In this very important detail the statement breaks down. But again, supposing this insurmountable difficulty were got over, we should then be left with a statement equally impossible, namely, that no sign would be given but the resurrection of Christ — the most stupendous sign conceivable; for Christ said on another occasion that men who could resist the message of Moses and the prophets, would not be convinced, even if one were to rise from the dead; that is, even by a miracle of the most startling kind.

There are these two reasons, founded in the nature of the case, for believing that these words could not have been spoken by Christ. When we turn to the text, we find our suspicions confirmed. The utterance is recorded both by St. Matthew (xii. 39–41) and St. Luke (xi. 29, 30, 32), and in St. Luke the troublesome words do not occur. In this place we read: *For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also shall the Son of man be to this generation.* Jonah was himself the

sign. The tragedy was that while the Ninevites repented at his preaching, the Jews resisted the preaching of One who was greater than he. This version bears upon the face of it the stamp of probability. It is not encumbered by the insurmountable difficulties of the other. It does not appeal to externalities: it moves within the sphere of the spirit. Whether the amplification of the sign in Matthew's Gospel be due to Matthew himself or another, we cannot now tell.

Here, then, lower criticism, which is criticism of the text, and higher criticism, which is criticism of the contents, converge towards the same result. They lead us, no doubt, to believe that Jesus regarded the story of Jonah as historical, but they also show that His interest in the book was a spiritual interest, and did not gather about the miracle of the fish.

Let us examine now His reference to the 110th Psalm. This, be it noted at the outset, is the only case in which the argument turns upon authorship. Important as it always is to read texts in the light of their context, it is of peculiar importance here. We have to remember that the utterance of Christ was not made in the course of preaching or teaching, but in the course of disputation. It has all the minuteness and color of controversy. It is addressed *to Pharisees*, and, as addressed to them, has a peculiar relevance and propriety. Its design, as Valeton[1] has aptly suggested, was not to convince *us* that the Messiah is at once David's son and David's lord, but to convince the Pharisees. He puts His question not to instruct, but to shame them. He wishes them to feel that their

[1] "Christus und das Alte Testament," p. 48.

zeal in a bad cause has betrayed them into ridiculous indiscretion, and that they have not carefully considered the consequences of admissions which they would all have made without hesitation. He takes them upon their own ground, and shows them how short-sighted and illogical they are. They ascribe the Psalm to David, without realizing the problem relative to the person of the Messiah which such an ascription involves. No doubt Christ shares their belief in the Davidic authorship; we cannot reconcile the explicitness of His words with any other supposition. But the passage is not adduced to settle a literary question: it is cited to silence the controversialists who had thought so skilfully to silence Him. Even if the Davidic authorship of the Psalm were completely disproved, it would not in the least destroy the relevance of the argument *as against the Pharisees*. "I am not prepared to assert," says Peters,[1] "that it is absolutely impossible that these words might have been, in substantially their present form, composed by David himself, although it is extremely improbable. As far as our Lord's utterances are concerned, however, I consider it a matter of complete indifference whether they were composed by David or Simon Maccabæus."[2]

One more passage remains to consider: the argument for immortality deduced from Exodus iii. 6 — *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. Here again we have to remember

[1] "The Old Testament and the New Scholarship," p. 74.

[2] It is also worth remembering, as has already been pointed out, that any quotation from the Psalter could be cited as David's. A quotation from Ps. xcv. 7 is cited in Heb. iv. 7 as *in David*, and the second Psalm, anonymous in the Hebrew, is in Acts iv. 25 also assigned to him.

that this passage issues from an atmosphere of controversy. It is addressed not to us, but primarily to the Sadducees. If it convinced or silenced them, it served the purpose for which Christ uttered it. It is therefore beside the point to adduce this passage in proof of the historicity of the patriarchs. It was cited to establish not a historic, but a spiritual fact — the fact of immortality. The fact on which the argument was based was believed by the Sadducees to be historic, and no doubt by Christ as well. We cannot conceive of Him as offering, even for purposes of controversy, an argument whose basis He knew to be insecure. But even if the historicity of the patriarchs could be disproved, it would not in any way affect the argument *as against the Sadducees*. Neither would it affect the spiritual fact of immortality, for that is a fact independent of this particular argument. It is therefore unfair to say that if you deny the existence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you destroy the argument for immortality. You destroy only this particular form of the argument, which was for the Sadducees, and not for us. The fact of immortality is an independent spiritual fact, resting on the intimacy of the relations between God and man, and would be in no way disturbed if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had never been. The words of Christ, born as they were in controversy, assume the form of an argument; but they are words for all time, and they have the force, if not now strictly of argument, at any rate of illustration. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are types of the men with whom God enters into living relationship. The relationship stands whether these

particular illustrations of it are historical or not; and on that relationship rests the fact of immortality. If the intimacy between God and us is such that He is not ashamed to be called and to call Himself our God, then we too are immortal with His immortality. It cannot be that a communion which a man had all his life enjoyed with God, should be interrupted by death. Beneath the controversial form and the Old Testament appeal, that is the real drift of the Master's utterance.

The result of the whole discussion has thus far been to suggest that Christ leaves perfectly open the literary and historical questions which occupy modern scholarship and divide its ranks. Repeatedly He quotes the Pentateuch, but never to prove that Moses wrote it; nor is the Mosaic authorship ever really relevant to the spiritual purpose for which the quotation is made. Repeatedly He quotes the Psalms, but never to settle the question of their authorship. Once, indeed, the argument turns upon authorship, and on that psalm opinion is now seriously divided; but, in the given situation, the argument was in any case valid. Repeatedly He quotes the prophets, but never to settle the literary questions which engage us to-day. Many of the greatest words are left without a prophet's name, for example, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*

It may fairly be asked, however, whether the questions be really left as open as they seem to be. It is admitted that in all probability Jesus believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, however little that belief affects the substance of His teaching. It is

practically certain that He believed in the Davidic authorship of the 110th Psalm. It is quite certain that He believed in the historicity of the patriarchal narratives. That being so, can these things remain an open question to those who bow the knee to Him as the Truth incarnate? Do the opinions which He can be proved to have held on these subjects not foreclose all scientific investigation or discussion, or at least do they not necessitate one conclusion? This question leads directly to a consideration of Christ's person and mission; and the only approximate answer is to be found, not in abstract speculation, but in an unprejudiced examination of such statements and suggestions as we can find on the pages of the New Testament, and, in particular, of historical statements relative to His earthly life. Little is gained for our present purpose by the discussion of kenotic theories, or by large assumptions as to what Christ could or could not have known. We will not argue, as has been argued, that His human nature was like the original nature of Adam before the Fall; that this perfection was still further enhanced — if, indeed, perfection can be made more perfect — by the supernatural grace bestowed at baptism, and also through the elevation of the human in His person, by reason of its union with the divine. We shall try to steady our discussion upon the acknowledged facts.

The most stupendous of those facts is that the Word became flesh.[1] It is impossible to fathom the

[1] We are here arguing with those who would not resent an appeal to St. John's Gospel. But in any case these words summarily express what the others throughout imply — the reality of Christ's humanity.

implications of this simple statement. It suggests infinitely more than the mere corporeal visibility of the Godhead. The incarnation was itself an accommodation. Something of what it meant, on its ethical side, is suggested by the stories of the temptation and the passion. *In the days of His flesh* — here we are on the ground of historic fact — *He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.*[1] The prayer recorded in the Gospels, "Not my will but Thine be done," helps us to imagine how sore a struggle it was. He was *in all points* tempted like as we are. He *learned* obedience. Here we are assured that, even within the ethical sphere, Christ grew. We may call it development or we may resent the application of such a word to Christ; but the fact remains that He grew.

If it be possible to predicate growth of Christ within the sphere of His ethical and religious nature, it will surely not be impossible within the sphere of intellectual knowledge. This, or at any rate mental growth in the larger sense, is expressly attested in so many words by St. Luke, twice indeed within the same chapter. *The child grew and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom* (ii. 40). *Jesus advanced in wisdom* (ii. 52.) It behooved Him *in all things* to be made like unto His brethren,[2] and one of those things may well have been the limitation of His knowledge. Indeed, in one of the most solemn utterances of His life, He admits this limitation. He admits that in common with men and angels He does not know the day nor the hour of His second coming: that is

[1] Heb. v. 7. [2] Heb. ii. 17.

known to the Father alone. Now, if *a priori* argument is ever admissible, we should have been inclined to argue that this is just one of the things which Christ was bound to know, for it seems to fall directly within the sphere of His special mission. This, at least, is no irrelevant literary question. It bears directly, though we need not say vitally, on His work as judge of humanity; yet He does not know. It is impossible to turn the argument by saying that there is a great difference between ignorance of the future and ignorance of the past; to omniscience there can be none. This particular future is one which in the most intimate way concerns Christ Himself; in any case, this utterance is enough to disprove His omniscience in His earthly life. It is not possible to claim omniscience for Him in the face of an utterance of His own in which He implicitly denies it; and, if He be not omniscient, it is arbitrary to assert that He must at least have known the past. If He did not completely know the future, there is no reason in the logic of things why He must have completely known the past. If one of the things which was intimately bound up with His mission He confesses that He did not know, it is difficult to see why He must have had perfect knowledge of facts and problems that lay completely outside the immediate sphere of that mission.

In all matters which were not strictly relevant to His work as Saviour and Redeemer, why may He not have shared the opinions of His time? Why may He not have been like His brethren in this as in other things? He wore an Oriental dress. He spoke an Oriental language. He expressed Himself in Oriental

ways. We are assured that He learned, He grew. Just as there was a limitation of power, attested by His being hungry, thirsty, and weary, so it would not be unnatural to suppose — even if we had not His own express testimony — that there was a limitation of knowledge. But the more He has in common with His brethren, the more amazing are the differences that separate Him from them. Assuming that both He and they believed in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, how infinitely more profound is His interpretation and application of it than theirs! Whence hath this man these things? There is the marvel of Christ, — that His spiritual insight is so immeasurably above theirs. He may well have shared their opinions on questions of authorship, etc., without thereby endorsing them for all time, just as He shared their opinion that the mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds, without thereby binding it upon the modern conscience, in spite of irrefragable evidence to the contrary.

Further, it is necessary to distinguish between the things which Christ definitely taught, and those which lay within what some one has happily called the "neutral zone." He teaches that talents are given in trust and to be used; but He does not *teach* that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. He may assume it; He may believe it; but He does not teach it. He does not make it a condition of salvation. It falls within the neutral zone. It could never be so important to believe it, even if it were demonstrable, as to believe that no man can serve two masters. The one has to do with literature, the other with life. The former

belief does not touch a man's character. He is not the better for believing it, nor the worse for doubting it. But the latter belief will guard him from that compromise which is the ruin of life. To the religious life some beliefs are vital, others are irrelevant. It would be a great surprise to find Christ co-ordinating these two in importance. In point of fact, He does not do so. His positive teaching is confined to the vital beliefs. He does not *teach* anything at variance with the results of Old Testament scholarship. There is nothing to hinder a man from accepting every word of Christ's teaching and every result of the literary criticism of the Old Testament. He leaves the questions which it discusses severely alone. Once we read that Christ taught as one having authority, and we have but to examine the Sermon on the Mount to see within what sphere His teaching lay. The difference between Jesus and the scribes was too obvious to ignore. The people were astonished by His teaching. The teaching of the scribes was confined, in the main, to trivialities which never smote the conscience unless to offend it: Jesus dealt directly with the tremendous issues of the moral and spiritual life. Men may hold views other than His on questions of the authorship or composition of Old Testament books; but no one can dispute what He *taught*. So far is He, however, from teaching definitely on literary and historical questions, that these problems had not even been raised in His day. His mission was not to speak authoritatively on the science of Old Testament Introduction, any more than on medicine or astronomy. These are matters which, in the provi-

dence of God, men are left to discover for themselves. They constitute no part of revelation. He came to preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God. He came that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. His mission was a spiritual one, and literary issues were irrelevant to it. It was no part of His task to dispute current traditions, unless when they perverted the souls of men; and then He did so unsparingly. But He refused to cumber Himself with cares which did not properly belong to Him as Saviour. *Who made me*, He said, *a judge or a divider over you?*

The words of Christ do not then foreclose the investigations of modern scholarship. His kingdom is not of this world, and the truth which He came to proclaim is not that of literary authorship or historical fact. Current opinions on these things He may have accepted, as He spoke the current language and wore the current dress; but they are no part of His message. He defined His mission as the proclaiming of good news and the bringing of abundant life, and He deliberately confined Himself to that mission as thus conceived. He had the single eye. He knew the road on which He must tread, and He trod it, setting His face steadfastly and refusing to be turned aside to the right hand or the left. In accordance with His purely spiritual conception of His mission, He cannot have desired, and He certainly did not claim, to pronounce any final word on literary or historical problems. These remain to baffle and stimulate succeeding generations of scholars, and to provoke to a more earnest study of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER IX

CRITICISM AND THE SUPERNATURAL

One of the heaviest counts in the indictment against criticism has been its alleged attitude to the supernatural. Often criticism has ignored it; sometimes it has denied it; usually it is indifferent to it. So runs the count; and where it is true, it is serious. For whatever we may include under the somewhat vague and subtle term "supernatural," it has always been felt to represent something vital to Christianity. If it goes, Christianity, as a unique and distinctive thing, goes with it. It becomes only one of the great religions of the world, "nothing less and nothing more." An attack upon the supernatural has therefore always been felt to be a blow aimed at the heart of Christianity, and has been hotly resented, wherever Christianity is dear.

It is quite clear that, next to its apparent disregard of the appeal to Christ, no part of the issue raised by the critical position has thrown the opponents of criticism into so real or profound an anxiety. Echoes of the distress come from many lands, from Britain and America, from Germany and France. Thinkers who differ widely in the concessions they are prepared to make to the critical position, unite in opposing, with

all the force they can, the alleged elimination of the supernatural from the history and literature of the Hebrews. On this point the Rev. Dr. John Smith, in his "Integrity of Scripture," repeatedly and emphatically dwells: to him, as to many, the issue here raised is one of altogether unique gravity. Objection is taken — and rightly, so far as it applies — to the naturalistic assumptions of the critics. The Old Testament has been made by criticism to fit "into a naturalistic idea of human development" (p. 32). "The anxiety of the critics," we are told, "has been to bring the history into line with a normal human development" (p. 183). The only thing which the critical reconstruction justifies is a "current view of the growth and progress of religions. . . . The truth is, the whole hypothesis is naturalistic" (p. 282). "Disbelief in the supernatural," says Bishop Ellicott, "has had a great deal to do with the development of modern views of the Old Testament."[1] Dr. Blomfield goes further, assuring us that "no question can reasonably be raised as to the fact that the *fons et origo* of the disintegration of the Old Testament which has been now for so many years attempted, is the determination of a large number of Continental scholars to reject the whole of the supernatural element which its books contain — with which, indeed, most of them are saturated and imbued."[2] A German Roman Catholic scholar, who is both fair and well-informed, makes his charge in the following trenchant words: "Modern critics suppose that they

[1] "Christus Comprobator," p. 16.
[2] "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," p. 54.

have by their investigations won a deeper insight into the essence and growth of the people and the religion of Israel. The tendency which comes more or less clearly to light in their restless scientific activity is to let the historical and religious development of the people of Israel appear as natural as possible. Many investigators are remarkably shy of everything supernatural: an extraordinary interposition of God in the fortunes of His people is inconvenient for them. The Almighty must keep His hand as much as possible out of the game. The whole history of the elect people must run a purely human course and must be explained entirely with the natural light of our understanding. In a word, the ground-idea of the entire modern criticism of the Bible is Evolutionism, is, if we may say so, the transference of the Darwinian theory of evolution to the departments of history and religion. The higher critics seek to divest Holy Scripture entirely of its supernatural character, and to set it up as a work of man."[1] Elsewhere[2] the same scholar urges as a reason for rejecting criticism the fact that it stands upon the ground of rationalism, and tends to undermine the foundations of faith by representing "everything supernatural, all supernatural revelation of God, as superfluous and impossible."

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the question, or the gravity of the charge, so far as it is true. As some one has not unaptly said, "If the supernatural is removed from the Bible, no Bible is left." Indeed no Christianity is left. If the super-

[1] Höpfl, "Die höhere Bibelkritik," p. 12. [2] p. 96.

natural be denied on principle on the ground of the Old Testament, it will be equally denied on the ground of the New. The criticism which does that will seek to rob Christ of His divinity. It will give us a Saviour upon our own level, and therefore one who can be no Saviour at all. Little wonder that criticism has been despised and rejected, if it either assumes or issues in the denial of a factor whose absence would cause the fabric of the Christian religion and experience to fall to pieces.

This, then, is the question: Does criticism either assume or issue in the denial of this factor? There are really two questions here, and they must be kept distinct. It is quite conceivable that criticism should issue in the denial of this factor; but it has no right to assume it. In so far as it has accepted, as one of its *a priori* principles, the impossibility of the supernatural, it is vitiated from the start. It stands self-convicted of incompetence to give an unbiassed investigation to what we may call miraculous facts. It rules them out as impossible, and so merits the condemnation of those who desire to see fair play given to every order of fact. For fair play is not done when facts are investigated from a standpoint which makes only one interpretation of them possible.

The whole question of the presuppositions which one is justified in bringing to historical study is a thorny one. The ambition of a scientific mind should be to approach all such study without prepossessions of any kind. There are some who strive to do so: many who think they can do so. But is the thing possible? No man's mind is a *tabula rasa:* every

student brings himself to the investigation. The mind which he uses may indeed be working for the first time upon this particular department or problem; but it has already worked upon other problems, and has been shaped and determined by that work, and by all the mental and spiritual experience of the man, in very special directions. To one who can point to an apparently sudden transition in his spiritual experience, nothing will be impossible: a divine power has convulsed and regenerated his life, and he will laugh at a theory which denies the possibility of divine interposition.[1] To the man, on the other hand, who has spent his years in the laboratory or in some scientific study, which has steadily and surely impressed upon him the unvarying sequences of cause and effect, and what he can only call the inexorableness of law, miracle will seem so remotely possible that its possibility is hardly worth considering: every day of study deepens its improbability till it may pass, in his mind, into a practical impossibility. Both types of men are determined, and inevitably determined, by their experience. Study, disposition, temperament, experience, have much to do with a man's general mental attitude. It is a familiar fact that deepening experience and wider study may lead him conscientiously to doubt what he once believed with all his soul, or conversely, to believe what once he doubted. Every day the mind is being determined by the subtlest influences. There is no such thing as a perfectly open mind. There may be the passion for truth, and the desire to be fair; but the mind is already, by its pre-

[1] We are using these words in the popular sense.

vious history and growth, predisposed to one view of the facts rather than another.

To approach a study without prejudice or prepossession of some kind is impossible. But it is one thing to have a prepossession, conscious or unconscious; it is another thing to have a fixed opinion. And it is a mere mockery of scientific method to bring to the investigation a definite opinion which prejudges some of the most important problems that will emerge in the course of it. We cannot bring a *tabula rasa;* but neither ought we, in fairness, to settle in advance what we are pretending to examine. Any man gives away his case as an impartial historian of the facts who says, as Renan did, "It is because they relate miracles that I say the Gospels are legends." No historian has any right to approach his task with the assumption that the miraculous is necessarily unhistorical, and that it is his business to eliminate it or explain it away. Whether it is, in reality, historical or not, will of course depend on many considerations, — partly on the credibility of the witnesses to it, partly on their nearness to the incident recorded, and so on. The historian is justified in demanding more testimony to a miraculous event than he would to an ordinary one. But he is not justified in rejecting it simply because it does not happen to fit into his view of the world. He can only rightly do so if he first successfully vindicate that view; and in so doing he will have to leave the field of the historian for that of the philosopher. Besides, any view, to be valid, would have to rest on an induction of all the relevant facts; and this very fact which he rejects may be one

which, if given its proper and natural weight, would seriously modify his view. True science reckons, so far as it may, with objective facts. To condemn the miraculous in advance as impossible, is as unscientific as it is unfair. The critic has a right to demand from his opponent that he do not approach the Bible with a dogmatic bias. His opponent has an equal right to demand of him that he do not prejudge the case by an anti-supernaturalistic bias.

A criticism which on *a priori* grounds rejects the miraculous is itself to be rejected. But when we ask whether this attitude to the supernatural is a universal and necessary feature of higher criticism, we must answer with an emphatic negative. It has indeed been a too familiar feature of criticism, but it is neither inevitable nor universal. The tendency of the opponents of criticism has been too much to identify the whole movement with the principles and results of Kuenen and Wellhausen. Considering the very eminent services which both these scholars have rendered to the cause of Old Testament study, this tendency is explicable. These men, whose ability and learning — whatever we may think of their conclusions — are beyond all question, have, in a sense, been the pioneers of the movement, in its more modern phase. They have given an extraordinary impetus to the study of the problems, which even those who differ from them have not always been reluctant to acknowledge. However much their results may be modified — and they are being modified — their influence has been stupendous. But it must be strenuously maintained that the movement does not stand

or fall with them. Pioneers often take extreme positions which are seriously modified in the clash of subsequent discussion. We have already seen that a reactionary movement has begun, which finds its most brilliant and outspoken representative in Gunkel, and which, though confessing its profound indebtedness to Wellhausen, is yet more conservative in its tendency, and reserves for an early, sometimes a very early, period much that he had relegated to the time of the monarchy. This statement holds good also of other aspects of the subject. Very relevant to our present purpose is the confession of Professor Meinhold, who had been reproached by his opponents for his dependence on Wellhausen.[1] "*Well I know*," he says, "*what separates me from him; namely, the accentuation of the supernatural moment in the history of Israel and its prophetism. That is assuredly not a subordinate point.* But at the same time, the gratitude with which I regard this scholar, I shall the less forget, as many who, like myself, are indebted to him, hold it proper to accentuate rather that which separates them than that which they have received from him. . . . One may be an opponent of Wellhausen's," he warmly remarks later on, "and at the same time be far enough from Christianity. One may be an adherent of his, and yet with glad heart confess his allegiance to the religion of revelation. Many of my colleagues do this in common with myself. We accuse any one of falsehood who maintains the contrary of us." What Meinhold maintains with some vehemence is precisely that, the possibility of which is denied by most of the opponents of criticism.

[1] "Jesus und das Alte Testament," p. xviii. The italics are ours.

But this is surely a matter in which each man is his own best judge. Each man knows whether he believes in and accentuates the supernatural factor in Israel's history and religion or not; and if he says he does, are we not to take him at his word? There is perhaps no point of similar gravity on which the critics have received less justice than this. Their deliberate and solemn confessions have been repeatedly ignored or explained away; and, considering the importance of the supernatural to the Christian religion, this is the point on which they have been most grieved to be misunderstood. "It is necessary to distinguish," says a French scholar, "between the naturalistic interpretation which Kuenen and Wellhausen have given to the history of Israel, and that history as it manifests itself to the unprejudiced observer who accepts, in the matter of purely literary criticism, the general conclusions of these scholars."[1] The principle of the development of the history of Israel, he affirms, must always be sought outside of its apparent causes, which are insufficient to explain it. It is therefore supernatural.

This last quotation strikes the key-note of the distinction to be found within the ranks of the critics themselves. One may accept the general methods and conclusions of the criticism of Wellhausen and Kuenen, in so far as it is *purely literary*, without committing one's self to all of their *historical* conclusions. For it must be remembered that their historical conclusions do not all represent the inevitable issue of their literary conclusions. Those which have given

[1] Loisy, "Études Bibliques," p. 89.

most offence nearly all rest upon an unproved philosophical assumption. A man may be a believer in revelation and the supernatural, whatever view he may hold of the date and literary origin of the Pentateuch. Whether it is a unit or composite, whether it be composed by the great lawgiver or by members of prophetic and priestly guilds, whether it belongs to the thirteenth century B. C. or in the main to the eighth century, it contains an account of certain facts. Obviously no view of the date or authorship can affect the quality of these facts — considered, that is, as objective facts, apart from the record of them. If these facts are miraculous, using the word in its popular acceptation, they do not become less so because the record of them comes from a period five centuries later than we supposed it did. We are not here speaking of the conceivable modifications which a tradition may have undergone in the course of that time. That is a question by itself, and not an easy one. But in any case, tradition, however it might work upon an epoch-making fact, such as the Exodus, could not obliterate it. Again, some of the greatest facts were enshrined in almost contemporary song, and thus were carried safely across the centuries. Assuming then the recorded facts to be facts, whatever be the medium of their preservation, whether tradition, song, or some visible and material memorial, they remain, as objective things, unaffected by the problems that gather round the literary record. They would so remain, even were there no literary record; and the compositeness of the Hexateuch may enable us, as we saw, to adduce several witnesses to a fact

where, on the theory of its unity, we have only one. No decision within the sphere of the purely literary problems can evaporate historical facts or eliminate the supernatural from facts which cannot be explained as the result of purely natural forces.

This is an elementary point, but it cannot be too earnestly emphasized, that literary criticism is one thing, historical criticism another; and that the acceptance of the general methods and results of literary criticism does not bind a man to one view of the history more than another. It furnishes him with the record of certain facts: how he will arrange and interpret these facts will depend upon altogether different considerations. If he be predisposed, either through philosophic or scientific study or by the natural bent of his mind, to deny the supernatural, then he will do his best to put a natural construction on those facts. Where this is difficult, he may attribute the difficulty to the slenderness of our information. He may stop gaps by conjectures, and indulge generally in feats of the historical imagination. If, on the other hand, he be not predisposed against the supernatural, if he believe in the power of God to interpose in the interests of a great purpose, he will let the facts which are most adequately explained in that way, and which were interpreted in that way by those who were specially called to read the divine meaning of the past, make their own impression upon him. He will not depreciate the supernatural as impossible, if it be sufficiently attested; he will rather welcome it as a proof that God is Lord. But in either case the literary and the historical questions must be kept strictly

apart. They are closely connected, no doubt. Literature, in the largest sense, supplies the material for the historian; but literary criticism does not supply principles for the interpretation of that material. The literary criticism of the Pentateuch would not have to be modified in the smallest detail if the existence of the supernatural were placed beyond all controversy. Literary analysis does not depend on the denial of the supernatural. It rests upon the observation of literary phenomena; and its main results are accepted, as we saw, by many who are opposed, in general, to the modern critical position. The cry, then, that criticism is an open or covert attack upon the supernatural is not justified by the facts. Of some critics, it is true; of many others, and especially of more recent critics, it is false, and emphatically repudiated by their own express testimony.

Throughout the discussion we have been using the terms "natural" and "supernatural" in a somewhat loose and popular way, as it was no part of our design to deal with the question philosophically, but simply to discuss the relation of criticism to the supernatural, as popularly understood. But such terms are, in the very nature of the case, relative. We know too little of either to be able to delimit incidents by so simple and convenient a nomenclature. A distinguished theologian has said, "I utterly deny that God's action can be correctly described as miraculous; it is natural." God is not arbitrary. He must have a purpose, He cannot deny Himself; and therefore His action must be always essentially self-consistent, however it may seem to us, who have not the key to it.

But though the opponents of criticism have been justified — though by no means as against all criticism — in their emphasis on the supernatural, they have not been justified in supposing, as they have sometimes done, that those who deny the supernatural, as commonly understood, in history, therefore deny the divine in it. To see the divine merely in the so-called supernatural is to run a grave risk of ignoring it, or doing less than justice to it, in the ordinary flow and sequences of history. We must see it as that power, if we may modify the lines of Tennyson,

> "Which makes the darkness and the light,
> And dwells not in the *dark* alone."

We cannot afford to find God merely in the gaps, and to call Him in as a *deus ex machina*, to unravel tangled knots, or to perform acts that are too difficult for the so-called natural factors. He must be in all, and through all, as well as over all. And many men who believe that there is everywhere throughout the universe inexorable law and the unbroken sequences of causation, yet find in this majestic order the reflex of Him who is without variableness, or shadow cast by turning; and many such men have confessed that the universe, as thus interpreted, presents to them a spectacle of nobler and more mysterious majesty than would a universe whose God appeared only fitfully and in corners. However this may be, we are not justified in setting a man down as an atheist who disbelieves in miracle. The ordinary may be to him as divine, as, to another man, the inexplicable and the extraordinary. The saintly William Law has put

this truth with his customary lucidity: "Could we see a miracle from God, how would our thoughts be affected with an holy awe and veneration of His presence! But if we consider everything as God's doing, either by order or permission, we shall then be affected by common things, as they would be who saw a miracle. For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle, but as it is the action of God, and bespeaks His presence; so when you consider God as acting in all things, and all events, then all things will become venerable to you, like miracles, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the Divine presence."[1]

The argument from Messianic prophecy has often been vitiated by this exaggerated attention to details, and comparative inattention to the whole scope and spirit of the older dispensation which, by what it lacked as well as by what it promised, pointed to Christ. The older argument revolved for the most part round a limited number of Old Testament texts, most of which have no warrant for their Christological application in the New Testament, least of all in the words of Christ Himself. We have already seen how large and noble is the Messianic argument offered by Christ. He claims to fulfil the law and the prophets; He shows His disciples out of the Old Testament things concerning Himself. Yet He hardly ever calls attention to the particular texts which have for ages been the stock-in-trade of the Messianic argument. His Father was working hitherto, guiding not only this utterance and that, but the whole history towards its fulfilment in Himself. In the law and the prophets,

[1] "Serious Call," ch. 22, towards the end.

not merely in stray verses and isolated sections, He found the promise and prophecy of Himself. "It would be an *ignoratio elenchi*," as Professor Charles happily says, "to press the fulfilment of special predictions as proofs of the Divine guidance of events, where we regard the whole movement as Divine."[1]

Certainly it is not from the Bible that men have learned to elevate the supernatural at the expense of the natural. True, God is Almighty: *is anything too wonderful for Jehovah?*[2] But His presence and power are revealed as much in the sustained order of the world as by the breaches of that order. The very same Hebrew word for "wonderful" as occurs in the passage just quoted is used by the author of the great lyric on the omnipresence of God to describe the marvel of God's nearness to him in the common life of every day (Ps. cxxxix. 6). Meteors have their place; but even without them the heavens would declare the glory of God. The unbroken procession of day and night offers its endless testimony.

> Day unto day is a well-spring of speech,
> And night unto night a revealer of knowledge.[3]

Another psalmist was moved to wonder, when he considered the heavens, the work of God's finger, the moon and the stars which He had established. He is the God of the calm, as well as of the storm; the author of peace, as well as of confusion. The Flood manifested His power; but it was equally manifested by the order that followed. *While the earth remaineth,*

[1] "Expositor," April, 1902, pp. 249, 250.
[2] Gen. xviii. 14. [3] Ps. xix. 2.

seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

But it is not enough to say that criticism does not deny the supernatural; it has a positive contribution to offer. By laying bare the facts, it has forced us to feel how marvellous those facts are. The older apologetic emphasized the supernatural in detailed incident; the results of criticism, while not ignoring this, suggest its presence rather throughout the long development of the history and the religion. Even if objection were successfully taken to much of the detail which it has always been the custom to regard as miraculous, the history and the religion would remain unique and undeniable facts. No one who has but the faintest smattering of history or the most rudimentary knowledge of the times in which he lives, will dispute the uniqueness of the Jewish people; and that uniqueness is due to the uniqueness of their early discipline and experience as a nation. And their religion is as extraordinary as their history. The religion developed as the history advanced. But how did it develop? and why did it develop in Israel along lines which find a parallel nowhere else? How did Israel attain her pure and noble thoughts of God, related as she was by blood and language, by custom and institution, by trade and travel, to peoples whose worship of God was at once cruel and licentious? There is the real miracle of Israel's religion, and no amount of petty criticism of detail can overthrow the solid fact of Israel's separateness among the peoples of the world. She was in the world, yet not of it; at least we may say this of the "Israel indeed" — the elect men who

represent Israel before the world; for the mass of the people, as the prophets often and bitterly complain, were really no better than the peoples by whom they were surrounded. The religion of Israel, with every temptation to be absorbed by or assimilated to the religions of the cognate peoples, not only resisted them, but outlived them, and, in the completeness which was given to it by and in Christ, is substantially the religion of the progressive nations of the world to-day, and the only religion which can, with any reasonableness, aspire to be the universal religion of humanity. We still think of God largely in the language of the prophets, and pray to Him in the language of the Psalms.

Is the undeniable uniqueness of this strange people an accident? No one will believe that who believes that there is a purpose in history. And if there be such a purpose, then this people was chosen, as it felt itself to be, to contribute, in some high and special way, to its fulfilment. It was not for nothing, or for reasons that were selfish, that they prayed the God who had chosen them to be merciful to them, and bless them, and cause His face to shine upon them: it was that His way might be known upon earth, and His salvation among all nations (Ps. lxvii.). They felt that they had a cosmic function, and they responded with intelligence and enthusiasm to the largeness of their destiny. History has confirmed the stupendous claims of Israel. She did not misread her mission in aspiring to bring all the round world to a knowledge of the living God.

But who are these, and whence came they — these

whose message is so profound, original, and divine? We know whence they did not come: the science of comparative religion has made that plain enough. Where to-day are Zeus and Poseidon and Hephaestus? Where are Chemosh and Milcom and Melkart? Their very names are forgotten by almost all but the learned, and with the gods are perished the religions under whose sanction they were worshipped. Who is a god like unto Israel's God? And how does it come that the God of this one little people lived on — a people which had little science and less art, a people whose land for centuries formed but a tiny and insignificant province of the great empires to which it was in turn compelled to give allegiance? The reign of this particular God was destined to be universal, because He was a moral God, and morality is universal. But why precisely in that land did thoughts of such a God arise? This is the real problem of Israel's history: how are we to account for that which differentiates her from the sister peoples?

How certainly Israel would have gone the same way as they did, had she been left to her own devices, we shall see, if we remember how very much she had in common with them. The language of the Moabite stone,[1] with its startling resemblance to that of the Old Testament, perhaps reveals this as simply and

[1] A monument erected by the king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4) about 850 B. C. to commemorate his victories over Israel. It was discovered in 1868, and it is of great linguistic interest and some historical importance. Text and translation are easily accessible to English readers in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," vol. iii. pp. 404–408, and in Driver's "Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel," pp. lxxxv–xciv. There is also a translation in G. W. Wade's "Old Testament History," pp. 514, 515.

graphically as anything else would do. A few of the more illustrative sentences will make the point clear. "I [that is, Mesha, king of Moab] made this high place for Chemosh . . . because he caused me to see my desire upon all them that hated me. . . . Omri was king over Israel, and he afflicted Moab for many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he also said, I will afflict Moab. . . . But I saw my desire upon him and upon his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction. Now Omri took possession of the land of Medeba, and [Israel] dwelt therein during his days and half his son's days, forty years: but Chemosh restored it in my days. . . . And the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the king of Israel built for himself Ataroth. And I fought against the city and took it; and I slew all the [people of] the city, a spectacle for Chemosh and for Moab. . . . And Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel. And I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn till noon, and I took it, and slew the whole of it, seven thousand men and . . . women, and . . . maidservants; for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the [vessels] of Jehovah, and I [dragged?] them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel had built Jahaz, and he abode in it while he fought against me. But Chemosh drove him out from before me. And I took of Moab two hundred men, all its chiefs, and I led them against Jahaz, and took it. . . . Chemosh said unto me, Go down and fight against Horonaim, and I went down. . . ."

It is not merely that the language of this Moabite inscription is so like Hebrew as to be, in the main, quite intelligible to the student of ordinary Hebrew historical prose; but the religious ideas and usages attested by the inscription are no less remarkable for their resemblance to much that is to be found in the Old Testament than the phraseology itself. If for Chemosh the god of Moab we were to substitute Jehovah the God of Israel, we might almost mistake the inscription for a chapter of Joshua or Judges. Chemosh has high places just as Jehovah has, and they have the same name. He saves from the oppressor those who trust in him, just as Jehovah does. He lets the king see his desire on all his enemies, just as Jehovah does. He can be angry with his land, as Jehovah with His land; and his anger is similarly shown in the devastation of the land by its enemies. He too, like Jehovah, restores the land when his anger is turned. His oracle, like Jehovah's, commands and inspires an attack upon the enemy. He, like Jehovah, drives out the enemy from before his people; and so on. Here we see, within the compass of a few lines, unmistakable testimony to a phenomenon familiar to the student of the Semitic peoples — the remarkable agreement of their languages, ideas, practices, and rituals.

It is precisely this remarkable agreement between Israel and the sister peoples that compels us to face, and if possible to account for, the still more remarkable difference between her and them.[1] Almost all

[1] How profoundly the Hebrews were affected — directly and indirectly — by the institutions of the dominant Semitic peoples has never

the factors in her development were matched by those of her neighbors. If the ultimate difference was so extraordinary — her religion has lived, while theirs has been dead for centuries — must it not have been due to the presence and influence of another factor? As Bredenkamp puts it: "The principle of natural development is insufficient to explain the history of Israel. The uniqueness of the Old Testament religion demands the uniqueness of her history. As long as we must recognize the distinction in principle between the Old Testament religion and all heathen religions, so long shall we be unable to measure sacred history with the measures of profane history." [1] Without endorsing this use of the words sacred and profane, we yet cannot help admitting the force of the argument. The history of Israel must remain a riddle to all who refuse to acknowledge the power of God to intervene in history. Scholars may differ as to when that which was distinctive of Israel's religion first came to be. The Old Testament itself ascribes it to Moses; much recent scholarship has been inclined to give the honor to the literary prophets of the eighth century B. C., though there are not wanting signs that this conclusion will have to be seriously modified, and modified, too, in the direction of the traditional belief which sees in Moses the real founder of Israel's re-

received more striking illustration than in the recently discovered code of Hammurabi (2250 B. C.), which furnishes many striking parallels to Biblical laws. Here again, however, the differences are equally striking. "No one can fail to recognize the higher moral standards reflected in the Old Testament laws" (Professor Kent, in the "Biblical World," March, 1903, p. 189).

[1] "Gesetz und Propheten," p. 11.

ligion, not only in a national, but in a distinctively ethical sense. But however that question may be disputed, there is no dispute about this, that the religion of Israel is, in point of fact, distinctive: it has something which the others had not. Where did that something come from?

To say that it is due to the influence of commanding personalities is simply to shift, not to solve, the difficulty. It pushes the problem only a step further back. Moses, Nathan, Elijah, Amos — wherever the distinctive thing began, that which made Israel's religion different from that of Moab and Ammon and all competing religions, it began somewhere, and not only began, but was maintained, under conditions anything but promising, by a succession of like-minded men. Personality is the profoundest of all secrets; to waive it aside as itself a natural stage in a natural development is to beg the whole question at issue. When personalities of a particular kind appear only on a special soil, and that under conditions which do not adequately explain them, and which are unable to produce similar personalities on similar soil, we are entitled, to assume that so unique a phenomenon demands a unique explanation.[1] In other words, natural development is insufficient to explain the acknowledged distinctiveness of Israel's religion.

[1] "That revealed religion *is* revealed, and is not the product of human genius, despite the gradual unfolding of that religion, and the coherence of its parts, becomes increasingly evident, the more thoroughly its characteristics are appreciated. Its unique character finds no satisfactory explanation in the native tendencies of the Semitic race. History belies such a naturalistic solution." Fisher, "Nature and Method of Revelation," p. 50.

Without, then, entering into detailed discussion of miraculous incidents, to some of which, on various grounds, exception has occasionally been taken, the great and indisputable fact of the uniqueness of Israel's religion furnishes us with a potent argument for the presence within it, or influence upon it, of the supernatural.

This argument, be it noted, is as valid on the critical view of the Old Testament as on the traditional. The uniqueness of Israel's religion is not essentially affected by the critical reconstruction of the history. Whether the prophets precede the law, or the law the prophets, there was a law and there was a prophecy: a law which purified much that was offensive, mitigated much that was harsh, and spiritualized much that was material, in common Semitic custom; and a prophecy which has no parallel anywhere else in the world. These are simple facts; they are not affected and not explained by any chronological readjustment. A German scholar testifies that the picture of Israel's history resulting from the Higher Criticism "can be placed under the idea of the government of God, and *under the conception of revelation*, as well as, nay, better than, the common view." And Alfred Loisy calls attention to the utterance of a Roman Catholic scholar, to the effect that "this development of Israel's religion across the centuries" (that is, the development as portrayed by criticism) "is a thing not less admirable, not less worthy of God, *not less visibly supernatural*, than the idea of a revelation complete from the beginning and which would not have been understood before the end of the captivity; of an

immobile legislation written in the desert and observed only in the time of the second temple," etc.[1] Such utterances we must accept as proof of this, at least, that the critical view of the history is not inconsistent with a belief in the supernatural.

By some it is even held to necessitate such a belief. Professor Sanday, for example, makes the following reassuring statement, which in its simple emphasis leaves nothing to be desired: "My experience is that criticism leads straight up to the supernatural, and not away from it." He is here thinking of the singular phenomena of prophecy in particular, of the sense of divine prompting enjoyed by the prophets; but the remark is capable of generalization. "We are willing to explain them" (that is, the Biblical writers), "to set them in their proper place in space and time, to give them their true position in the development of God's purposes, but we refuse to explain them away." In a public lecture delivered before a convention of the Christian students of Scandinavia in 1901, Professor Erik Stave of Upsala emphatically maintained that "neither in regard to its political outlines, nor in regard to its religious development, is the history of Israel a result of merely human forces, or of the free play of accident."[2] In dealing with the remarkable differences, in spite of the often quite minute resemblances between the early stories in Genesis and their Babylonian counterparts — a point on which we shall have occasion to dwell more fully in the next

[1] "Études Bibliques," p. 89.

[2] "Der Einfluss der Bibelkritik auf das christliche Glaubensleben," p. 16; cf. p. 23.

chapter — Lenormant strikingly remarks, in his "Beginnings of History," that "between the Bible and the sacred books of Chaldea there is all the distance of one of the most tremendous revolutions which has ever been effected in human beliefs. *Herein consists the miracle.* . . . Others may seek to explain this by the simple natural process of the conscience of humanity; *for myself, I do not hesitate to find in it the effect of a supernatural intervention of Divine Providence*, and I bow before the God who inspired the law and the prophets."

It is clear, then, that criticism is not fairly described as involving the denial of the supernatural. At the same time, its treatment of the detail of the history has sometimes not unnaturally raised the suspicion that one of its objects is to eliminate the supernatural, where possible. A closer examination of the facts, however, will show that this is not so, and to this examination we propose to devote the rest of this discussion. We do not propose to enter into any exhaustive discussion of the miracles of the Old Testament. We merely desire to show that some of the incidents which have commonly passed for miracles are not represented in the oldest sources as miracles at all; or, at best, are miraculous in happening only when and where they did.

We must remember, to begin with, that the Old Testament contains much more poetry than would be supposed by one familiar only with his English Bible, and with the principles of English poetry. The Revised Version has done a good deal to disinter the poetry that was buried out of sight by the typographical

methods of the Authorized Version; and in few parts of the Bible do the changes of the more modern version come with a greater shock of surprise and pleasure than in the historical books. We have not read far till we come upon an ancient poem, the barbarous song of Lamech, which breathes the wild, vengeful manners of an early time. And this is only the first of a series of poems, or snatches of poems, which meet us again and again. Not only long poems like the blessing of Jacob, the song of Moses, the song of Deborah, or the elegy of David, but briefer strains like the curse of Canaan, the blessing of Shem and Japheth, the oracle of Rebekah, the song of Miriam, the song of the well, the riddle of Samson, the song of the Hebrew women over Saul and David, find their place within the pages of Hebrew historical prose.

Now the effect of this is very striking. It imparts a quaint archaic flavor to the recital of the deeds of the remote or recent past. It stirs the blood as ballad poetry has always done; and — what for our purpose is important — it is an indication of the sources on which, in many cases, the prose narrative undoubtedly rests. Nor is this any mere conjecture. For in several cases the prose narratives themselves refer to the poems for corroboration or illustration of the incidents with which they deal; and it is a thousand pities that we know no more of the Book of Jashar or of the Book of the Wars of Jehovah than they have preserved for us in their citations. But it goes almost without saying that they relied upon these books, and possibly others similar, in cases where no direct appeal is made. This seems to lie in the nature of the case. Such a

book as that of the Wars of Jehovah would surely contain more songs of the conquest than one. May not even the song of Deborah have found a place within it? We know that for the story of the conquests of Joshua, the Book of Jashar was drawn upon, a book which seems to have been devoted to Israel's heroes, as we know it to have contained the elegy of David over Saul and Jonathan, and probably also the song — preserved in the Septuagint — in which Solomon dedicated the temple.

If that be so, is it not reasonable to suppose that either or both of these books lie behind the story of many an exploit in Joshua and Judges, especially as there are other citations in the latter book, notably in the story of Samson? It is surely no unfair use of the historical imagination to suppose that, as a poem confessedly lies behind our present story of Joshua's victory over his confederated foes in the south (Josh. x. 12, 13), so the story of the capture of Jericho may rest upon another poem (Josh. vi.). But even if this be not conceded, it is as plain as the laws of Hebrew verse can make it that there is far more poetry, especially in the earlier books of the Old Testament, than is acknowledged even by the Revised Version. The words of Adam, for example, on the creation of woman are expressed in verse:

> This is now bone of my bone,
> And flesh of my flesh:
> Woman shall she be called,
> For from man she was taken (Gen. ii. 23).

For him that has ears to hear, the echo of an old poem can often be heard even in a context that is matter of fact to the last degree; for example,

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day

All the fountains of the great deep were broken up,
And the windows of heaven were opened (Gen. vii. 11).

To any one who undertook it, this study would be as profitable as it is fascinating — to search for the poetry behind the prose, especially in the earlier historical portions of the Old Testament. The illustrations adduced could easily be amplified even by a cursory study.

If, however, all this is true, what follows? That often we are reading poetry where we had supposed we were reading prose; and poetry has its own laws and canons of interpretation. No greater injustice can be done to poetry than to interpret it as prose. It will not do to treat as if they had statistical or annalistic value the bold and fervid utterances of the lyric imagination, nor will it do to interpret a metaphor as if it were a plain and sober statement. But that is precisely what has always happened to poetry, when interpreted into prose by the less elastic minds of a later age, which has lost the art of suggestion, and insists on having everything defined and classified. In his Essay on "The Lives of the Saints," Froude aptly illustrates this universal tendency from the life of St. Patrick. "The marvellous in the poetical lives," he tells us, "is comparatively slight; the after-miracles being composed frequently out of a mistake of poets' metaphors for literal truth. . . . The poetical life of St. Patrick is full of fine, wild, natural imagery. The boy is described as a shepherd

on the hills of Down, and there is a legend, well told, of the angel Victor coming to him, and leaving a gigantic footprint on a rock from which he sprang back into heaven. The legend, of course, rose from some remarkable natural feature of the spot: as it was first told, a shadowy unreality hangs over it, and it is doubtful whether it is more than a vision of the boy; but in the later prose all is crystalline; the story is drawn out, with a barren prolixity of detail into a series of angelic visitations. And again, when Patrick is described as the after-apostle raising the dead Celts to life, the metaphor cannot be left in its natural force, and we have a long, weary list of literal deaths and literal raisings. So in many ways the freshness and individuality was lost with time."

So long as metaphors are liable to be misunderstood, so long will poetry be exposed to such a fate. Whether ancient Hebrew poetry suffered in this way is a question to be settled, not by *a priori* considerations, but by an examination of the available evidence, each case upon its own merits; and it will not be out of place to remember that, on more occasions than one, Christ's own disciples missed the meaning of metaphors which one might well suppose would have readily suggested their own interpretation. When He bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, they said, "It is because we have no bread" (Mark viii. 15–18). And when He spoke of a sword, they said, "Lord, here are two" (Luke xxii. 36–38).

It is fortunate for our consideration of this problem that we have in the Old Testament two or three cases of a duplicated narrative — one in prose and one in

verse — so that we can watch the transition from the one to the other, and see how, if at all, the story has been affected in its transit. It goes almost without saying in such a case that the poetical version is the older; the poet never appeals to the prose history, but the prose historian appeals to the poem. The process of transition can perhaps be studied to most advantage in the duplicated account of the attack by Jael upon Sisera, for in this case both the prose and poetical narratives go into fairly minute detail. Let us hear the testimony of the poem first, as it is the older (Judges v. 25–27):

> Blessed above women shall Jael be,
> The wife of Heber the Kenite.
> Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
> He asked water, and she gave him milk;
> She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
> She put her hand to the nail,
> And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
> And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
> She smote through his head,
> Yea she pierced and struck through his temples.
> At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
> At her feet he bowed, he fell:
> Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

This description is as clear as it is powerful and graphic. When the tired chieftain was drinking the milk which Jael brought him, she seized a hammer and struck him therewith a mighty blow upon the temples, and down he fell. A whole verse is devoted to the description of the fall: there is a weird repetition in the lines which would fain sink the grim scene into

the most sluggish imagination. When we pass to the prose version, however, the scene is changed (Judges iv. 18 ff.).

Sisera turned in unto her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, *and covered him.* And he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent-pin, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his temples, and it pierced through into the ground; *for he was in a deep sleep;* so he swooned and died.

No apologetic device can successfully reconcile these two narratives. If he was in a deep sleep, how then did he "bow, and fall and lie, yea, bow and fall"? With the most elaborate and impressive art the poet rivets our attention on the fall — a fall which in the prose narrative is impossible, for Sisera is sleeping. How then did the mistake arise? Possibly, as Robertson Smith has suggested,[1] through the idea that two actions instead of one are described in the first two clauses of verse 26 — an idea encouraged by the bold use of the word "peg" in the sense of the handle of the hammer. The hand which Jael puts to the peg is not the left hand, but the right. In accordance with a very familiar usage of Hebrew poetry the second clause often describes, with a little enlargement, or repetition, or diversity, the same act as the first. If

[1] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 132.

the question be still asked how a Hebrew could come to misunderstand a thing so simple, we can answer that, in any case, the prose version is irreconcilable with the poem, while this explanation would account for the rise of that version in course of time. Besides, an old word, or a word used in a rare sense, can easily give rise to misunderstanding. And as we have already seen, language as simple, though of a different kind, was misunderstood by those who companied with the Master. There is, of course, no miracle here; but the passage is an admirable illustration of the dangers to which ancient poetry was exposed through later misinterpretation.

This general consideration prepares the way for the examination of incidents which have been commonly regarded as miraculous. First, consider the alleged miracle of the sun standing still as narrated in Joshua x. 12–14:

> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.

A glance at the Revised Version reminds us, if the form of the story were not of itself sufficient to remind us, that this narrative is partly prose and partly verse. Joshua's apostrophe to the sun and moon is a poetical quotation, excerpted from the Book of Jashar, and acknowledged as such by the later historian. Doubtless he had the whole poem before him, while we have only the extract which he has seen fit to give us. But it is enough to justify us in doubting whether the interpretation of the incident as a miracle is a correct one. What the apostrophe pre-

cisely means has always been a moot point among the commentators — whether that Joshua is praying for a prolongation of the light, in order that the fell work of vengeance may be completed, or whether he is praying for darkness; for the literal translation of the words rendered "stand still" is "be silent." But on either view the words are poetry, and are not to be interpreted as prose. To do so is to argue one's self destitute of poetic sympathies, and to apply to poetry a standard which, by its very constitution, it must refuse to acknowledge. The modern historian must have no prejudice against the miraculous as such, if it be properly attested; but neither must he seek miracle in incidents which the oldest sources relate with all the imaginative freedom that has always been the special prerogative of poetry.

A very instructive illustration of the way in which a poetic narrative is affected when it is paraphrased by later generations is to be found in the various accounts of the crossing of the Red Sea, given in the different documentary sources.[1] The oldest source is undoubtedly the poem in Exodus xv.; and there the incident is thus described:

With the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were piled up,
The floods stood upright as an heap;
The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea (ver. 8).

This is a powerful poetic description of a storm — of the effect of wind upon a shallow sea. So in verse 10:

Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them.

[1] The manner in which the separate documents are discovered has already been illustrated in Chapter VI.

Now in the Jehovist narrative which stands nearest in point of time to the poem, the action, though divine, is still ordinary.

> Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided; and the Egyptians fled against it, and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Here, as in the poem, though with more detail, the sea is driven back by a furious wind; the Egyptians try to cross as the Israelites had done, but they perish in the returning water. In the Elohist document, a little further removed from the original source, the incident begins to assume a somewhat more miraculous aspect. Moses lifts up his rod — a regular feature of the Elohistic narrative — the angel of God places himself between Israel and her pursuers, and took off their chariot wheels. In the priestly document, which is much the latest, the original metaphor of the poem is hardened into a plain prosaic statement. The waters were divided, and the Israelites *went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.* The bold figures of the poem are interpreted by the later historian into a miracle of the strangest sort: the piled-up waters become a wall *on the right hand and on the left.* Here we see the transformations of a poem as it passes across the centuries. The story is in each document substantially the same; but it increasingly tends to take on a miraculous shape.

Two other interesting illustrations of the same

tendency are to be found in the story of Samson. The Revised Version makes it clear that the tale in Judges xv. rests on an ancient poem, two lines of which are quoted in verse 16. Now let us start with the poem, as that is the older source. The text and translation are not just as certain as we could wish,[1] but the translation of the Revised Version will serve our purpose. Now the first thing to notice is that the first two words of the poem — *bilechi* in the Hebrew — are capable of two translations: they may mean either *with a jaw-bone* or *at Lehi*. Again, the Hebrew word for "ass" is identical with the word translated "heap," so that what originally meant *at Lehi, heaps upon heaps*, could easily be interpreted to read *with the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps*, especially if we assume that the word for "heap" was written once too often — and nothing is commoner in ancient manuscripts in such a context. Once the word "ass" appeared in the first line, under the influence of the interpretation of *lechi* as jaw-bone, the same influence would naturally attract the word into the second line; so that the lines of the original may have simply run:

> At Lehi, heaps upon heaps,
> At Lehi, I smote a thousand men.

This is on the assumption that the dubious word rendered "jaw-bone" should be translated by "Lehi." But should it? How shall that question be settled? The margin of the Revised Version reveals the interesting fact that in other verses besides the one in

[1] Cf. Cobb in "Journal of Biblical Literature," 1901, vol. xx. pt. 2, "Hebrew Rhythm."

question, notably in verse 19, the same alternative translations occur, and it deliberately inserts "Lehi" in the text of verse 19, where the Authorized Version translates by "the jaw," thus removing, by this simple change, one miracle out of the passage: "God clave the hollow place that is *in Lehi*, and there came water thereout" (R. V.). The story describes the origin of a spring or well; and that "Lehi," not "jaw-bone," is the correct translation is made practically certain by the concluding statement that the spring (En) exists *in Lehi* unto this day (so A. V.). With this clue we go back to verse 17, and find that the place of Samson's exploit was Ramath-lehi, which literally means "the high place of the jaw-bone." Now the bearings of the story begin to be intelligible. The scene of the exploits was known as Lehi or Ramath-lehi, the hill of the jaw-bone, which in all probability took its name from its shape, just as possibly the shape of another hill gave to it the name of Golgotha, the place of the skull. Samson then wrought his deeds of daring *bilechi*, that is, not with a jaw-bone, but at Lehi. There can be little doubt that that is the sense of the earliest form of the story, and that the subsequent version of it rested on misunderstanding.

In all the cases which have been discussed, fragments of the ancient poetry on which the prose history rests have fortunately been preserved; but it is practically certain, as we have seen, that there is a poetical basis for much of the present historical narrative, even where no direct appeal is made. It remains to ask whether we have any reason to believe that this im-

plicit poetry shared the fortunes which some of the poetry that has been preserved undoubtedly shared at the hands of later interpretation. The description of the fall of Jericho would seem to be such an instance. The impression one naturally derives from the story as told in Joshua vi. is that the walls miraculously fell at the sound of the trumpet.

When the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Now is it not clear that this must be interpreted as the language of poetry? The religious meaning behind the poetical form is that no walls can stand before Jehovah when He fights for His people; fall they did, as fall they must, at the blast of the horn and the battle-shout. The story is so told as to emphasize the mysterious presence of the divine help; but only a dull imagination would suppose that it implied the absence of fighting.[1] The victory was complete, and very likely easy, but it was at least contested. We are fortunate to possess, in another part of the book,[2] interesting and quite incidental testimony to the fact that there was fighting. "Ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: *and the men of Jericho fought against you.*" A battle there

[1] The passage receives admirable illustration in Professor Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pp. 267, 268: "In war, Jericho has always been easily taken. That her walls fell down at the sound of Joshua's trumpets is no exaggeration, but the soberest summary of all her history."

[2] Josh. xxiv. 11.

was, though perhaps not a very fierce one; but the poets and historians of Israel always and lovingly dwell rather on the help given them by their own God-man of war, than on the prowess and tactics of the human warriors, though these are not forgotten.[1]

Scholars who interpret in this way such narratives as those we have been considering are obviously not inspired by any animus against the supernatural, but simply by the desire to be true to all the facts, and to interpret each department of literature by the canons which are properly applicable to it. If, however, the results of a legitimate exegesis are, as we have seen, to set in a natural light some incidents which we had been accustomed to regard as supernatural, it is all the more incumbent upon us, who believe in the supernatural, to rest it upon a larger argument, which will not be shattered upon the minutiæ of exegetical interpretation, but which is as broad as history and as incontrovertible as the uniqueness of Israel.

[1] Thomson ("The Christian Miracles and the Conclusions of Science," p. 31) regards the fall of Jericho as belonging to those "events which are not in themselves miraculous, unless in so far as they derive this character from a meeting together of ordinary circumstances in a way so strange and singular as to demand reference for their conjunction to the immediate interposition of a personal and supernatural power." There is an element of truth in this; but the narrative needs no special defence as soon as its poetic character is recognized. H. Clay Trumbull ingeniously explains the falling of the walls by the vibratory motion of the march, rendering the foundations insecure; and for the effects of the shout he compares the concussions of cannonading or the blasting of rocks ("Sunday School Times," Oct. 4, 1902).

CHAPTER X

CRITICISM AND INSPIRATION

If criticism is to have its way, what is to become of the inspiration of the Scriptures? That is a question that is perplexing many minds to-day. Before discussing the possible fate of inspiration, it is worth while to know what we mean by it. Whether it is imperilled by criticism or not, will depend very much upon what we conceive it to involve. And here at the outset we are met by a difficulty of no mean order. For, as the late Canon Liddon said, "No authoritative definition of what the inspiration of Holy Scripture is, of what it does or does not permit or imply, has ever been propounded by the Church of Christ." The Church, under the providence of God, has shown her wisdom in abstaining from defining a quality so subtle, however real and pervasive, as to elude definition; and there is much to be said for the cautious statement of the late Master of Balliol, in his famous essay on the "Interpretation of Scripture," that "all definitions perhaps err in attempting to define what, though real, is incapable of being defined in an exact manner."

Nothing would seem at first sight to be easier than to enumerate the qualities, or some of them, that must be possessed by a book for which inspiration is claimed. The Bible is commonly known as the Word

of God; its authorship, therefore, should guarantee its perfection in every department and in every detail. In ancient times the relation between the Biblical writers and the God who inspired them was expressed by the simile of the lyre or the harp, which had but to be struck by the hand of the player; and the simile perfectly illustrates the supposed passivity of the recipients of revelation. But we no sooner examine the books than we see that there was more than passivity. Everywhere there are marks of the keenest activity and the strongest individuality. We find in the Old Testament, for example, two prophets offering opposite messages to the same people at almost the same time: Isaiah sublimely sure that the temple will stand, Micah sternly confident that it will be levelled with the ground. We find in the New Testament Christian truth apprehended and appropriated in widely differing ways: Paul's emphasis on faith matched by James's insistence on works. There is anything but monotony in the books of the Bible: there is the ever changing interest of varied human personalities.

In other words, the Bible is more than the Word of God, or than words of God. It is also a word of men, or words of men; and would it not be natural to expect that, as surely as it has upon it the stamp of divinity, because it comes from God, so surely will it also bear the stamp of humanity, because it comes through men? We would, from this point of view, have as much reason for supposing that it shared the imperfection and fallibility of all human things, as that it was perfect and infallible, unless we could

convince ourselves that the presence of God within it preserved it from those otherwise inevitable dangers. Now it is easy to argue that God must have so preserved it; but it is both more profitable and more reverent to examine what He did than to assume and dogmatize about what He must have done. We have no right to bring to the examination of Scripture any preconceived notion of inspiration: if we do, by what authority shall we justify it? To learn wherein their inspiration consists, we must interrogate the Scriptures themselves as to what they are and what they claim to be and do. Then and not till then shall we be in a position to judge whether their characteristic quality has been essentially affected by criticism or not.

Now it is more difficult than it seems to approach Scripture without prepossession. Our knowledge of its place in history, our experience of its power in our own lives, often encourages a certain reverence, neither unintelligible nor unworthy, which prevents the facts from making their natural impression upon our minds and impels us to vindicate or explain away all that, to our better judgment, seems unworthy. It was this that led the fathers into the flowery paths of allegory. To men who did not realize that morality and religion had a history, and that God revealed Himself to men as they could bear, much in the Old Testament was bound, if interpreted in its plain and natural sense, to seem beneath the dignity of revelation;[1] so it was purified by the easy method of allegory. This spirit is far from dead to-day.

[1] For this reason, the Gnostics rejected it. In the absence of the idea of historical development and of degrees of inspiration they could do nothing else.

Otto Funcke, the German Spurgeon, humorously tells in his autobiography[1] how adroitly his mother used to extricate herself from the difficulties of interpretation into which she was occasionally led by her view of Scripture. "It was very hard for her," he says, "to allow that the sins of the holy men and women of whom Scripture tells us were real sins. So she adopted the most daring interpretations in order to preserve the immaculate virtue of her 'saints.'" She excused, for example, Rebekah's deception of Isaac on the ground that "the old man was already no doubt a little childish; and Isaac would certainly thank Rebekah in heaven for having made him against his will an agent in the divine purpose." David's dancing she cautiously justified by asserting that he danced alone and not with a woman! It was not easy to exonerate Abraham of his lie before Pharaoh. This she explained — by a happy approximation to the truth — as due to the imperfection of the old dispensation, under which lying was not regarded as a real sin. As proof she urged that the pious Jews of to-day do not count it a sin to cheat and deceive their Christian fellow-citizens!

All such evasions of the obvious sense, whether in ancient days or modern, all such defences of the morally indefensible, have their roots in the recognition of a divine presence in Scripture, with which the natural and obvious interpretation of such incidents is supposed to be inconsistent; but they arise no less from the failure to recognize the intense humanity of Scripture. The men who wrote and the men of whom

[1] "Fussspuren des lebendigen Gottes," vol. i. pp. 75, 76.

they wrote were of like passions with ourselves. We have in the Bible not so much the pure presence of the Divine Spirit, as that Spirit moving among, acting upon, blended with very human spirits. Some one has said that we cannot have the assurance of infallibility "unless we could ensure not only the presence of the Divine Spirit in the man, but also the absence of everything else." Now one of the supreme tasks of criticism — a task in which it has been very successful — has been the recovery of the humanity of the Bible. For centuries this had suffered an almost total neglect which, historically considered, was quite explicable. When the Bible was felt to be not a compendium of more or less intelligible doctrines, but a message of the living God, it began to be appreciated also as a message of and to living men. The interest in ancient humanity generally was accompanied by an interest in the humanity of the Bible; and criticism may be described as the process which has more and more striven to lay that humanity bare.

Now it will be clear why there is often a seeming antagonism between criticism and inspiration. The latter regards the Bible as a divine book; the former, as a human book. The critics will often seem to ignore its divinity, just as their opponents often seem to forget its humanity. But there is no real or necessary opposition between the two. The Bible is indeed a word of God, but it is a word which came not only to men, but through them. In justice to both its elements, then, it not only may, but must, be studied on both its sides. The studies are not mutually exclusive, but complementary. To feel the living

throb of the message, the plain man must try to understand the thrill of response which it woke in the heart of the man to whom it first came; while the scholar who studies the men and their times, ideas, equipment, genius, may yet believe with all his heart that there is an unseen presence in this book, that it is not these men themselves that speak, but the Spirit that speaks in them.

Perhaps we do not really appreciate the divine majesty of the Bible, until we see how varied and fascinating is the humanity of it. Let us look, then, at the latter first, and this will help us to see the conditions under which inspiration, using that word in the loosest sense, had to work. Whatever it is, it cannot be inconsistent with the acknowledged facts of the Bible. If we find facts which are not congruous with what we should expect in an inspired book, we shall not pervert or reject or explain away the facts in the interests of the theory; but we shall allow the facts themselves to suggest to us a theory which will, if possible, meet them all. It is an ungracious task to fasten our attention, even for a little, on the difficulties of Scripture. Its message is, in the main, so plain and direct, its words so simply and so universally true, that they readily lodge themselves in the unsophisticated conscience, and constrain a true heart to acknowledge them as divine. At the same time, difficulties there are, and they are not far to seek. "The attempt to interpret all divergencies in the Scriptures as the result of misconception or ill-will on the part of the reader is arduous and wearisome."[1]

[1] Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," p. 19.

And these difficulties must be frankly faced. Intellectual honesty demands that, no less than the desire to know what things remain unshaken, amid all the change of critical opinion. A study of this kind is preparatory to an appreciation of the distinctively divine element in the Bible; if it cannot directly tell us what inspiration is, it will at least clear the way by showing us what it is not.

A book that is divine must be true. That seems to be a postulate which may be conceded without misgiving. But difficulties arise as soon as we begin more closely to define and apply it. What kind of truth must it possess? (i) Must it be always scientifically true — never clashing with the facts that science has discovered, and could no more doubt than she could doubt her right to examine them? (ii) Must it be always historically true — never falling into error in its statement of the objective facts of history, and, above all, never showing any inconsistency with itself, or making two irreconcilable statements about the same incident? (iii) Must it be always morally true — never exhibiting as praiseworthy a character which our moral sense condemns, and never urging a moral precept whose validity would not be universally acknowledged? (iv) Must it be always religiously true — never presenting us with a conception of God which needs to be abrogated, purified, or transcended? Obviously these questions are not to be answered by any *a priori* views of what the revelation purporting to be divine must contain, but only by a patient and exhaustive examination of the literature of that revelation.

(i) The number is decreasing perceptibly of those who would claim that the words of the Bible are a perfect revelation on such matters of physical science as it touches, and that they therefore preclude the possibility of scientific conclusions that differ from its own statements or implications. The first chapter of Genesis, when read in the right spirit and for the right purpose, is a word of unapproachable majesty; but there are few scholars who believe that it represents with absolutely literal accuracy the process of creation. It is indeed a providential approximation to the truth of science, but it is not a substitute for it. It presupposes the cosmogony of an age very different from our own. Those who feel that the truths of science are too convincing to be evaded, attempt to bring the Scriptural account into harmony with them, by urging that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and so on. All that is beside the point. It arises from a mistaken view of the function of Scripture, and besides is contradicted by the whole spirit and letter of the narrative. If the days be not conceived as real days, then the institution of the Sabbath as the seventh has no meaning; neither would the constantly recurring phrase "the evening and the morning" have any.[1] The writer gives us a clear and orderly account of his conception; we must do him the honor of supposing that he meant what he said. If his scientific notions can no longer be shared by students of modern science, the logical conclusion is that it is not his science that the Divine Spirit

[1] "God called the light day, and the darkness he called night." Gen. i. 5. This is surely explicit enough.

intended that we should learn from him, but something else.[1] And if the design of the first chapter of Genesis was not to inform us about truths which, in the long course of history, were to be discovered by investigation, but to usher us into the awful presence of the Creator-God, then the chapter has served its divine purpose, and it is idle to speak of its conflict with science, and frivolous to urge that as a reason for rejecting its specific truth. "Only an altogether unhistorical sense," says Gunkel, "can make the attempt to harmonize Genesis i. and modern science, or to bring Darwin into the field against Moses. It is truly pitiful that our church has not yet won a clear and worthy relation to Genesis i. so that the uneducated, or half-educated, when they hear for the first time of the 'natural story of the creation,' think the Bible is refuted. The dispute between theology and geology is settled when both keep to their own limits. Religion will have to allow science to speak of the origin of the world and of mankind, as best she can. Science, on the other hand, will neither affirm nor deny the dogma of the creation. This dogma has other than scientific roots. It is (according to Schleiermacher) the expression of faith in the absolute power of God over the world."[2] Whether the more incidental statements of the Bible touching matters of physical science — for example, that the earth is founded upon the seas, or stablished so that it can-

[1] Cf. Aubrey Moore, "Science and the Faith," p. 220. We must not "claim for Genesis what it never claims for itself — that it is a prophetic anticipation of nineteenth century science."

[2] Genesis. "Handkommentar zum Alten Testament," p. 120.

not be moved; or its more deliberate statements, such as those concerning the creation in Genesis i. — whether these are or are not corroborated by modern science, is a question to be examined quite dispassionately. If these are found to be scientifically untenable — and this is sometimes undeniably the case — then we shall have to conclude that the inspiration of the Bible does not guarantee its scientific truth.

(ii) What, then, of historical truth? Here the phenomena are, to say the least, surprising. Conflicting accounts of the same incident cannot both be true, and yet such accounts are undoubtedly to be met with. According to Kings, Solomon ceded Hiram cities in Galilee in return for a loan he received from him; in the Chronicler's account of the same transaction, it is Hiram who gives Solomon the cities, and it is not easy to see why. David numbers the people, according to one account, at the prompting of Jehovah; according to another, at the prompting of Satan. Even a cursory comparison of Chronicles with Samuel and Kings would yield a large number of illustrations. There are even two cases in which the Chronicler contradicts himself.[1] With all such phenomena we may do one of two things: accept the inconsistencies, or attempt to explain them away. Some of them, at any rate, are not to be explained away by any apologetic device; and the only other alternative is to accept them. If we do this, as we sometimes must, then we shall have to admit that inspiration does not necessarily guarantee the absolute accuracy of every historical statement.

[1] Cf. 2 Chr. xv. 17 with xiv. 5, and xx. 33 with xvii. 6.

This is not surprising when we remember how comparatively indifferent not a few of the Hebrew historical books are to history in our sense of the word. "The reigns of two of the greatest kings of Israel and Judah — Jeroboam II. and Uzziah — are dismissed in seven verses each, — verses, too, which in the latter case contain no hint, and in the former not much more than a hint, of their exceptional importance" (2 Kings xiv. 23–29 and xv. 1–7).[1] When we think of the elaborate and lively accounts of the battle of Salamis in Herodotus, or of Cannæ in Livy, and then turn to the meagre pages of the books of Kings, with only a word for the siege of Samaria, and only a verse or two for the capture of Jerusalem, we begin to realize that whatever the function of the Bible is, and however high, in certain directions, is its appreciation of fact, yet its interest in the details of history, if we may judge from its extant historical records, was not so living or consuming as our own. It is not without significance that the Jews placed their historical books, from Joshua to Kings, in the second section of the Old Testament, known as *The Prophets*, thereby indicating that the history is there considered from the prophetic standpoint, and that its interests gather round the ideas and principles it illustrates rather than round the recorded facts. It would not be proper to say that the Hebrew people were not interested in the facts of their history. The appeal of the older historians to such collections of ballads as the Wars of Jehovah, or the Book of Jashar, the reiterated appeal

[1] McFadyen, "Messages of the Historians," p. 91.

of Kings and Chronicles to royal annals for the expansion of a hint or for information on points concerning which they are silent, prove abundantly both that there was an appetite for fact and that that appetite was fed. But our contention now is that that is not the leading characteristic of the historical books of *the Bible*. Their large omissions and occasional inconsistencies are significant of their aim, which is not so much to record as to interpret.

We shall not allow ourselves to be unduly disconcerted by the difficulties which occur to every more or less attentive reader of such a story as the Flood story. We know, as Delitzsch says — and nothing but a false view of the function of the Bible obliges us to believe otherwise — that a flood covering the whole world up to the highest mountain tops is physically and geologically inconceivable. We must all have silently wondered how Noah contrived to get so many animals of so many different kinds into his ark, how food and drink were to be procured for them all, how the small window that ran round the upper story would supply the lower stories with light, how the narrator could speak so confidently of what was passing in the mind of God, and so on. These are all difficulties, and though some of them may not be insurmountable, they are enough to raise a legitimate suspicion as to the historical probability of all the details recorded. Should this suspicion arise in any one's mind, and deepen with further study, he will be in a painful dilemma, unless he lets these facts teach him, as they are surely calculated to do, that the importance of such a story cannot lie in its historical

detail, but in something else. What that other thing is we shall have occasion subsequently to examine. Meantime it is clear that whatever inspiration does, it does not necessarily guarantee accurate, lucid, and, self-consistent historical statement.

In the narrower sense of the term, Biblical history begins with Abraham. There is a weird titanic majesty about the vast period before him, covered by the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The discoveries of Egyptology, Assyriology, and palæontology suggest the great interval of time that must have separated early man from the first familiar figure of Hebrew history. We feel that we are moving about in worlds unrealized. The outlines are vague; ages are represented by names which are nothing but names; and when for a moment the vagueness defines itself, it looms out with an awful impressiveness but for a moment, and is lost in shadow again. Even if we were to accept the Biblical chronology for the period between Adam and Abraham, it is obvious at a glance that the Biblical account of that period cannot be historical in the narrower sense at all. Two millennia are represented by hardly half a dozen incidents, and when we begin to ask ourselves why, the reason is not far to seek. Doubtless this was not a period of great importance from the point of view of the Biblical historian. His interest is with the elect people; and to them he hastens with all speed, discarding much within their history and nearly all before it that is alien to his purpose, and selecting mainly what is relevant and illustrative of it. But there was the best of all reasons for writing with brevity concerning

a period so early. How could any one know anything about it?

Gird up now thy loins like a man;
For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding (Job xxxviii. 3, 4).

This simple challenge is the real answer to the assertion that in the account of the creation and the temptation we are treading the firm ground of literal history. The truth is that there is and there can be no account of the scene in the garden, historical in the sense in which the account of the revolution of Jehu is historical. It would be grotesque to suppose that the account was actually written then; and there is no claim anywhere made, as indeed one would not expect any, that the story is ultimately derived from those whose temptation and fall it describes. Neither is any claim made by the author — whether Moses or another — that he enjoyed a special revelation concerning that particular incident, or indeed concerning any part of the period that lay beyond the range of historical knowledge. From the Hebrew point of view the period is really prehistoric; and the section devoted to it is, in part, the Hebrew attempt to answer some of the problems with which the present condition of the world confronted them. Evil, pain, sorrow are ever present facts in life. Whence came they? Whence came the various languages that so effectually separate people from people? In these and in other such questions affecting human

life, every people that has reached even a rudimentary stage of reflection is interested; and they answer the questions in a large, naïve, imaginative way. They express, or rather suggest, their thoughts in the language of poetry, for the days of philosophy were not yet; and the stories in which they embody their thoughts of those days in the gray past, when the gods walked up and down among men upon the earth, are commonly known as myths. As an index to the deeper thoughts of an early people, the myth is of incomparable value, but it is not to be confused with history. It is a story with a moral: the story is the body and the moral is the soul. It is not the quasi-historical form, but the idea which it imaginatively embodies, that is the thing of real importance. The myth has a contribution to offer to the history of ideas, but hardly anything, beyond possibly a faint historical reminiscence, to the history of fact. The facts with which it confronts us move nearly all within the realm of poetry, in which animals can speak, and the gods can take on the likeness of travellers from a far country,[1] and eat and drink and speak with their earthly friends.

Now if it should be found or supposed that there was myth in Hebrew literature, as there is in Babylonian, Greek, and many another, would any one who appreciated the facts we have been considering have any occasion to resent it? Facts are facts, with which we must reckon, and to which we must accommodate our theories; and if it be proved, or even highly probable, that the earlier part of Genesis is not strictly

[1] Homer, "Odyssey," xvii. 485.

historical, but, in this sense, myth, then we should simply be compelled to admit that the inspiration of the Bible is not inconsistent with the presence of myth in it,[1] and this would be another illustration of the principle already alluded to, that the Hebrew historians are more interested in idea than in fact. It is not for us to say what elements shall be taken up by the Spirit of God into the Bible. He will do whatsoever seemeth good to Him; and it would be only natural, if the material of revelation should represent as many varieties as the literary forms in which that material is permanently embodied. Just as we have within the Bible historic and prophetic prose, lyric and dramatic poetry, so may we not have myth and legend and parable as well as history? It is a grave error to suppose that myth is synonymous with lying or deception: it is the ancient man's way of talking of a remote past, which explained some of the phenomena of his present. Nobody is deceived by it but one who completely misunderstands it; and there are hints enough, on the face of it, that it is not to be taken as history. If we are to suppose that animals spoke, then are we also to suppose that trees can speak? Jotham's parable maintains that they did: and this is as much a warrant for believing in the speech of trees as Genesis ii. is for believing in the

[1] "We are the dupes of words," says Bishop Perowne, "when we start back in horror from the thought of myth and legend in the Bible." Cf. G. S. Streatfeiid: "I cannot but think that we owe a debt of gratitude to the modern critic for making it so clear that, in the account of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, we are not reading history in the strict sense of that word." "Expositor," December, 1902, p. 410.

speech of animals. Nobody would dispute the right of parable to a place in Scripture; it has the high sanction of the Master Himself: and on what ground but that of prejudice can we dispute the right of myth? If through such ancient forms there breathes the spirit of the living God, it savors more of presumption than of reverence to reject them, because they seem to us unworthy. God is the best judge; and it often seems to be part of His plan to choose, for the execution of His purpose, the weak things of this world and the things that are of no account. The presence of myth, then, in Scripture, should such presence be proved, is no more prejudicial to its inspiration than the presence of inconsistencies.

It is often maintained that inspiration is a moral impossibility, if some of the books of the Bible originated as the critics claim they did. This difficulty has perplexed many a tender conscience, and perhaps ought to have been taken more seriously by criticism than has usually been the case. It is not an easy matter to accept, on the first hearing, the critical view of Deuteronomy as a production in the main of the seventh century B. C., published during the ministry of Jeremiah, and more than a century after the time of Hosea. It cannot be denied, in the light of its opening words, that the common interpretation of the book as a speech delivered by Moses to Israel at the conclusion of their wanderings is the natural one. But the opening verses of the book constitute only one of the facts; there are numerous other facts in the course of the book, and, above all, numerous facts of the most serious kind in other books, which seem to many to

render the "natural" interpretation of the book absolutely impossible, and to make, with a probability amounting to a practical certainty, for the critical view. This is not the place to discuss the actual merits of so complicated a question; but the critics are all as sincere in their views, and many of them as reverent, as their opponents in theirs. And too often the concessions which many critics would be prepared to make are practically ignored; as, for example, that in all probability Moses did actually deliver a final exhortation which enforced the truths that he was anxious to lay upon the conscience of his people; and this they can believe, though they also believe that the speech, in its present form, is an adaptation of Mosaic ideas to the needs and perils of a later and more complicated time. On the face of it, the speech is not literally and entirely such a speech as Moses could have delivered; it is interrupted on more occasions than one by an archæological note,[1] which, if any one will take the trouble to read the context, he will see to be simply incredible on the lips of Moses on that occasion, particularly as it already implies the conquest of Canaan by Israel. This interesting note proves, at the very least, that the original book was touched by later hands, and adapted to the needs of a later generation; and that is all that is claimed for

[1] Cf. ii. 10–12. "The Emim dwelt therein aforetime, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim: these also are accounted Rephaim, as the Anakim; but the Moabites call them Emim. The Horites also dwelt in Seir aforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded them; and they destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, *which the Lord gave unto them.*"

the book by the critics, though they considerably extend the application of the principle.

Additions to and expansions of an original nucleus are not so uncommon in literature as is often supposed. The Rev. Dr. Cobern aptly illustrates[1] the tendency of law-books especially to break their original bounds; and such a modern parallel as that which he adduces proves at least the reasonableness, though it takes other considerations to prove the probability, of the critical view of the Pentateuch. "The original legislator would naturally impress his name upon the whole body of laws. Blackstone's and Kent's 'Commentaries' and Story's 'Equity Jurisprudence' must always go by these great names, though much new matter has already been added to them. I think any one acquainted with the facts would be struck with the application to the Hebrew law-book of the preface by Dr. Bigelow to the thirteenth edition of Story's great work mentioned above. He says: 'In later editions a practice had grown up of making changes in the original text and notes in one way or another, generally by bracketed interpolations . . . [but] in process of time the brackets had sometimes moved into wrong places or dropped out altogether, and the result was that the work of the author could not always be distinguished from that of his editor. . . .'" If Moses was the founder of Israel's legal system, there is nothing to prevent a later readaptation of his laws in his spirit being known by his name.[2]

[1] "Biblical World," August, 1901, pp. 108, 109.

[2] For a very interesting parallel furnished by "Alfred's Dooms," see "The Oxford Hexateuch," vol. i. pp. 5, 6.

But a further question arises: Do the speeches of the book not claim to represent his very words, whereas the critical contention is that those speeches in their present form are the composition of others? We have already seen that at the very least some of the interspersed notes could not have been his; but with regard to the bulk of the book, the analogy of ancient literature, would again suggest that the speech, in spite of its introduction, might yet be the more or less free composition of a later historian, on the basis, no doubt, of an older record and of actual fact. Much light is thrown upon ancient methods of literary composition by an interesting passage in Thucydides,[1] in which he states the principles on which he composed his history. "As to the various speeches made on the eve of the war, or in its course, I have found it difficult to retain a memory of the precise words which I heard spoken; and so it was with those who brought me reports. *But I have made the persons say what it seemed to me most opportune for them to say in view of each situation;* at the same time, I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said." This is the candid statement of a historian who took the most scrupulous care in sifting his facts. He does what he can to produce the substance of the speeches; but he confesses that he is in part guided by a dramatic instinct for probabilities. Sometimes, as Professor Jebb has pointed out,[2] his speeches betray a distinct consciousness of later events, and

[1] I. 22.

[2] In his instructive Essay in Dr. Evelyn Abbott's "Hellenica," p. 287 ff.

contain allusions which would have been impossible or highly improbable on the occasions on which they are represented as being delivered. Occasionally the speeches are little more than the dramatic presentation of a situation on which the historian desires to concentrate his reader's attention. In any case they are illustrations of the comparative freedom which ancient historians allowed themselves in the composition of speeches; and there is no reason in the nature of things why the liberty expressly claimed by Thucydides may not be exemplified in Deuteronomy.

With the Book of Chronicles the case is different. Even if we allow that sources other than the Books of Samuel and Kings were at the disposal of its author or authors, the very numerous and extensive parallels subsisting between these books and Chronicles put it beyond all reasonable doubt that they constitute the principal source; yet the modifications of that source are not only numerous, but apparently systematic. The story of the revolution of Jehoiada in Chronicles (2 Chr. xxii.–xxiii.) is essentially the same as in 2 Kings xi., with the substitution of Levites for body-guard — a substitution which, in the light of other facts in the book, we cannot regard as accidental or insignificant. The reformation of Josiah takes place, according to Chronicles, six years before the finding of the book upon which, according to Kings, that reformation was based. Very many facts of this kind are revealed by a close study of the book, most of them clearly indicative of a certain attitude and temper. It may be possible — the critics think it is possible — to explain

these facts; but it is surely unfair to explain them away, in the interests of a theory to which they are inconvenient. Any valid conception of inspiration will have to take account of them; and it is not impossible that a fair consideration may lead to the result that inspiration is not a factor equally present in all books, but that some sustain the function of revelation more directly and adequately than others. Were this to be admitted, it would be no more than the Jews themselves admit when they arrange the books of the Old Testament in three divisions of varying degrees of inspiration. Modern criticism no doubt gives the honor to the prophets which the Jews assigned to the law; but both agree in admitting that there are Bibles within the Bible, and that its elements vary in their intrinsic religious worth. The Old Testament is not a monotonous plain, but has all the variety of mountain and valley.

A difficulty has been raised by the so-called pseudonymous books, that is, books which bear a fictitious name. There may be a place for such books, but assuredly not — it is argued — within Scriptures inspired of God. Here, again, may we not be in danger of bringing to the discussion our unjustified ideas of what revelation must be, of what it must include and exclude, instead of allowing the facts to suggest to us its methods and possibilities? There is a multitude of practically unanswerable arguments for the late date of the Book of Ecclesiastes: in that case, it cannot be from the hand of Solomon, as some of its words most naturally lead one to suppose. But what then? If the book, whether by reason of its sombre

truth, or of its inarticulate suggestions of the need of a Redeemer, or for any other more adequate reasons, deserves its place in the canon, it cannot forfeit that place, to which it has an *inherent* right, because of its pseudonymous ascription. If the book is both pseudonymous and independently worthy of a place in the canon, then we shall simply have to admit that pseudonymity is not inconsistent with inspiration, and that this literary device was used by the Divine Spirit, as many others were. We must carefully distinguish between such a literary device and moral dishonesty. The book may be regarded as a soliloquy, fittingly put into the lips of a king, whose knowledge of the world was wide, and whose name was a proverb for wisdom. These are his "words," — that is, a dramatic interpretation of life put into his lips by the gloomy and almost baffled thinker of a later age, whose problems pressed him sorely. This is one of the commonest devices of literature, especially of poetry. It is illustrated, for example, by the soliloquy of Ulysses in Tennyson.

> "I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move."

Such a speech the Odysseus of Homer could not conceivably have uttered. Still, there is a fine poetic propriety in Tennyson's choice of the wise and far-travelled hero to suggest a particular line of meditation.

The Book of Jonah is another book the critical interpretation of which has given offence as a deliberate attempt to ignore the miraculous. Now, without

discussing the incident, round which an altogether disproportionate interest has gathered, the place of the book in the canon is enough to suggest where its real importance lies. The book has the singular distinction of appearing among the prophets, in spite of its narrative form. The obvious inference is that its affinities are more with prophecy than with history; in other words, that its value lies in its ideas, rather than its facts. From this point of view the story of the whale, even if it were corroborated by Paley's twelve men of known probity, would be very subordinate in importance to the majestic ideas of the book — its missionary enthusiasm, its conception of the long-suffering and universal love of God, which embraces Nineveh as well as Palestine, and stretches down in pity even to the animal creation. We have already seen that ideas were more to the Hebrew historian than facts; and when we find a quasi-narrative book taking its place alongside of others whose business is not to narrate, but to bring home to the indolent consciences of men the mighty truths of God, we are left with no alternative but to emphasize the prophetic element of the book rather than the narrative.

(iii) The scientific, historical, and literary aspects of the Bible have been briefly considered, and certain phenomena have been pointed out with which any theory of inspiration will have to reckon. What is to be said of the morality of the Bible? Here we seem, at first sight, to be on less debatable ground; but no sooner do we pass from generalities to the examination of detail, than we are confronted with some stubborn facts, of which only one or two need be here

recalled. A blessing is pronounced on Jael for an act which, brave and patriotic as it was, involved a breach of one of the fundamental principles of Oriental morality — the law of hospitality. The Mosaic law of divorce was abrogated by Christ Himself, just as the temper of the prophet Elijah was rebuked by Him. Most of all is the modern Christian sense startled by the imprecatory tone of some of the psalms, even of some of the utterances of the tender-hearted Jeremiah.

Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow,
Let his children be vagabonds, and beg,
And let them seek their bread out of their desolate places,
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him.
Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children (Ps. cix. 9–12. Cf. Jer. xviii. 19–23).

This does not look as if it could be one of the rules of faith and conduct. It is rebuked and repudiated in the gospel of Him who told His followers to do good to them that used them despitefully, and who prayed, on His cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The precepts and examples of the Old Testament, however intelligible they may be in the light of history, are clearly not all of such a nature as to command the homage of the enlightened Christian conscience, so that inspiration does not guarantee the unimpeachable perfection of the morality of the Old Testament in all its parts.

(iv) No more does it guarantee the uniform purity of all its religious conceptions. In the earliest sources,

for example, God is found in fashion as a man. He walks about the garden in the cool of the day; He shuts the door of the ark behind Noah; He comes down from heaven to see the city and the tower which the children of men had built; He partakes the hospitality of Abraham His friend. There is a splendid, healthy reality about this intense anthropomorphism. Only men who believed in God with all their souls could have so spoken or written of Him. But such a conception is hardly a spiritual one; and, indeed, we can see it in the Old Testament gradually disengaging itself more and more from its material elements. One striking passage in Exodus xxiv. 9–11, says of the company on the mountain that they *beheld God, and did eat and drink.* In Deuteronomy, which criticism assigns to a later period, the spirituality of God is emphasized in such a fashion as to suggest almost a tacit correction of the older form of the story. "Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but *ye saw no form;* only ye heard a voice. . . . Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for *ye saw no manner of form* on the day that Jehovah spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire" (iv. 12, 15). An early source represents God as *speaking to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend* (Ex. xxxiii. 11); according to another source within the same chapter that was impossible: *Thou canst not see my face: for man shall not see me and live* (verse 20). In the light of such passages — and they could be indefinitely multiplied — it would be idle to deny that religious conceptions underwent a change. God had

many things to say to the people of Israel, but He could not say them all in 1200 B. C. The people could not have borne them then. When Israel was a child, God taught him to walk. He led Israel to more adequate thoughts of Himself by that gentle and gradual process which marks the divine dealings with men. When Israel was a child, he spoke as a child, even about God. He spoke with all the earnest simplicity and vivid imagination of childhood. When he became a man, he learned to think deeper thoughts, though he never forgot that such knowledge was ultimately too wonderful for him, and that no man by searching can find out God to perfection.

It is along these lines that criticism has done its work. Its peculiar province is to deal with the Bible on the side of its humanity, and it has discovered in many directions numberless proofs of that humanity in its imperfection as well as in its fascination. It has found the natural science of the Bible to share many of the ideas of the ancient East, its history to be not uniformly self-consistent, its moral and religious conceptions to be progressive. It has treated the Bible like any other book, and the result has been the disclosure of these indubitable facts.

But are these all the facts? The Bible needs no favor from its investigators, but it has a right to demand justice; and one who saw no more in the Bible than such facts as these to which we have called attention, would have missed its whole purpose, and grotesquely failed to account for its undying influence on humanity. For more obvious than the differences between the books, and the difficulties raised by some

of them, is the great unity which binds them all together, and justifies us in speaking of this large and diversified literature as a Bible, a single book. No other race "has left on the ear of humanity so definite an impression of a single voice."[1] From many points of a large circumference every section of the literature finds its way to a common centre, and that centre is God. *Immanuel* is the motto of the Bible, as well as the name of the Messiah: God with us — in warriors and prophets, in psalmists and sages, in rite and ceremony. God is the stupendous fact of the Bible; and while there is a revelation of Him in men, in their words, their aspirations, their institutions, and while it is on these things that the critic and historian, as such, concentrate themselves, it is not with these, but with the God who thus reveals Himself, that the religious man is primarily concerned.

It is a commonplace to say that the Bible is a religious book; but it is really a fact of unique significance. Why should no other literature betray just this kind of unity? And why should Hebrew literature, out of an immense mass of songs, annals, histories, and poems, to which it occasionally alludes, have selected just those things which produce this impression of unity? By briefly examining the Bible in the light of its tendencies and interests as indicated alike by what it contains and what it omits, we may win some clearer perception of its own purpose, and so be the more able to estimate the effect of criticism upon that.

Take, for example, the story of the Fall. Whatever

[1] Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," p. 21.

else that is, it is primarily a *moral* history. Whether it does or does not represent a single fact occurring at a definite point of time, it assuredly represents an eternal fact, re-enacting itself anew in the experience of every new soul that cometh into the world. It would be impossible to exaggerate its psychological truth. As a statement of the origin, essence, and consequences of sin, it will stand as long as the world. Every age will find there its own tragic experience reflected. The story shakes the conscience: it suggests the inalienable responsibility of man, the awfulness of estrangement from God, and the curse which He pronounces upon sin. If that is what it does, we may assume that that is what it was meant to do; and nothing that criticism can say about the story can alter its power to do that.

Or take the story of the Flood. Here again the moral interest is undoubtedly predominant. What the dimensions of the ark were, and how long the flood lasted, are of no consequence at all in the light of the majestic truths which the story was written, or at least adapted, to illustrate. It teaches with a power that is weirdly grand the fearfulness of sin in the sight of the Creator, who would rather see His fair world desolated by a flood than peopled by men, the thoughts of whose hearts were only evil continually. It illustrates also the pity as well as the justice of God. In this case the teaching which the narrative was intended to convey is not only not shattered, but strongly corroborated by criticism. For we are fortunate in having a Babylonian counterpart to this story; and, by comparing the two, we can easily learn what

constitutes the distinction of the Hebrew version of the story. There is much that is vivid and beautiful in the Babylonian story. For example, when the return of the seventh day had brought calm after the six days and nights of storm, Pâr-napishtim, the hero of the Babylonian story, says: "I opened a window, and the light fell upon my face"—a passage which, for vividness, reminds one of the "Ancient Mariner." But both in its statements and in its omissions the Babylonian story is separated by the whole length of a moral world from the Hebrew story. When, for example, Pâr-napishtim built an altar and offered sacrifice, the gods smelt the savour, and "gathered like flies over the sacrificer." The Hebrew story touches this very closely (Gen. viii. 21). Yet what a difference! It is monotheism against polytheism, the simplicity of a moral religion against the extravagances of superstition. Moral purpose, which is barely suggested in the Babylonian story, rings throughout the whole of the Hebrew story. In religious dignity, power, and truth there can be simply no thought of comparison between the two. "The difference," says Gunkel, "is immense. The polytheism, which is so strikingly prominent in the Babylonian story, has completely fallen away in the Israelitish tradition. . . . There is nothing in the Babylonian story of that profound sense of sin with which the Hebrew bows before the judgment of God. . . . How immeasurably superior, therefore, is the Hebrew story to the Babylonian! Shall we not then be glad that we have found in this Babylonian parallel a criterion to estimate the height of Israel's thought concerning

God, which is powerful enough thus to purify and transform what is strangest and most repulsive."[1]

This impression is confirmed by a study of all the Babylonian parallels to the stories of Genesis i.–xi. The question then naturally arises: How, on the basis of the same literary material, is this "immeasurable" difference to be accounted for? and the only adequate answer is, that here is the finger of God. The inspiration of Genesis i.–xi., at least, ceases to be a debatable question to one who has taken the trouble to compare the Hebrew stories with their Babylonian parallels; and the difference lies within the moral and religious sphere. The grossness, the superstition, the moral purposelessness of the one are matched by the earnestness, the truth, the dignity of the other. Here, then, is a section which is inspired, if the word "inspiration" means anything at all. Without attempting to define inspiration — though we need not altogether believe with Erasmus that every definition is a misfortune — we have yet to acknowledge here the presence of the thing itself. The breath of another life is upon it. Mere human genius alone could not have made it what it is; for it was a people of no mean genius from whom the parallel story came. And to urge that the Hebrews had a special aptitude for religion is only to ignore the mystery of personality, and to answer its difficulties with a sounding phrase. The "immeasurable" difference is adequately accounted for only by the controlling presence of a factor in the one which was absent, or all but absent, from the other. If religion and morality mean any-

[1] "Handkommentar zum Alten Testament," Genesis, p. 66.

thing at all, and if the world's chief task is to learn what they do mean, the facts we have been considering show that one of these peoples is qualified to teach it, while the other is not. Therein lies Israel's uniqueness. To those who believe that God is in His world and that history has a purpose, do not the facts themselves suggest that this people, or at any rate the leaders of her religious thought, were moved by God in some mysterious way to utter the truth about Him — a truth which grew indeed in clearness and purity, but which from an early time was powerful enough to assimilate and adapt to its own high ends the indifferent and sometimes unpromising material of common Semitic story ?[1]

With the hints derived from a comparative study of Hebrew and Babylonian tales, we have but to continue our advance through the Old Testament to find the presence of the same spirit as the early Hebrew stories manifest — a presence not always so powerfully felt, or so attractively embodied, but on the whole the presence of a Spirit with the same horror of sin, the same passion for righteousness, the same yearning to redeem. In no part of the Old Testament is that presence so imperious and unmistakable as in the prophets. If ever there were men who felt that

[1] For a detailed presentation of the argument in the two preceding paragraphs, see Ryle's admirable book on "The Early Narratives of Genesis." Very interesting in this connection is the confession of Professor Hilprecht, than whom no man speaks with more authority on this matter: "As the attempt has recently been made to trace the pure monotheism of Israel to Babylonian sources, I am bound to declare this an absolute impossibility, on the basis of my fourteen years' researches in Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions." Quoted from "Der Alte Glaube" in "The Sunday School Times," March 21, 1903.

they were not their own, but the servants of Another, these men were the prophets. Perhaps there is nothing in literature so amazing as this phenomenon of the prophetic consciousness. It defies analysis and even explanation, unless on the view on which the most original of the prophets themselves continually insisted — that they were called by God to the special service of uttering His truth, and inspired by Him with the truth they were to utter. How the call and the inspiration were psychologically mediated we do not and cannot know; but that they were tremendous facts, no one who is even superficially familiar with the pages of prophecy can for a moment doubt. Neither the one nor the other can be adequately explained simply as the result of an inner development. The prophets were not ambitious men who sought popularity, and created the call to which they responded. It was another voice than that of their own hearts that they heard, and often they heard it with misgiving and dismay. They could not go, they said; one, because he was a poor speaker, another because he was but a child, another because his lips were not pure, and so on. But they cannot help themselves. They are borne on by an irresistible impulse. *Jehovah took me and said, Go and prophesy* (Amos vii. 15). That is all. *When the lion roars, who is not afraid? When Jehovah speaks, who can help prophesying?* (iii. 8). They feel, as it were, a strong hand laid upon them (Is. viii. 11), and in that constraint they speak.

And as it was Another who called them, so it is Another's words they speak. *Jehovah said unto me.*

They may try to repress it, but it refuses to be repressed. It is *as a fire shut up within their bones* (Jer. xx. 9), and it burns its way out into flaming utterance. Their chief task is, in an age of time-serving and superstition, to *declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin* (Micah iii. 8). They are as the voice of God to an ungrateful and immoral people. But besides this, or perhaps as part of this, they occasionally show a strange power to interpret the meaning of events, and to forecast in great crises the more immediate future. It is more than political insight; they themselves would have scorned such an explanation. It was not so much a conviction that grew up within them — though it may have been partly that — as a voice from without that came upon them. It was not they that spoke, but the spirit that spoke in them. They were not led to their utterances by the logic of events, though of these events none were keener observers than they. God spoke, and they could not help prophesying any more than they could help being called. "The distinguishing characteristic of the prophets, first of their speech and action, and afterwards of their writings, was the firm and unwavering belief that they were instruments or organs of the Most High, and that the thoughts which arose in their minds about Him and His Will, and the commands and exhortations which they issued in His Name, really came at His prompting, and were really invested with His authority."[1] Now, if there were nothing more than this sense of divine possession, it might be disposed of as the outcome of

[1] Sanday, "Inspiration," p. 394.

ecstasy, and relegated to the domain of an antiquated Orientalism. But when we look at the character of the men thus possessed and at the quality of their work; when we think of their conception of God, with its unmatched blend of dignity, purity, justice, and pity; when we remember how their grasp and expression of the elemental truths of religion stands after centuries unrivalled, — we are bound to confess that the zeal which consumed them was equalled by their sanity. Their message, though spoken in Hebrew words, is a message for the universal heart; for, though they dealt for the most part with specific issues, they dealt with them in the light of the eternal and unchangeable truth of God.

Inspiration may be difficult to define, but the fact is impossible to ignore, whether we regard the express testimony of the prophets that they received their words from God, or the indirect testimony of the earlier part of Scripture to the presence of a spirit which effectually differentiates Hebrew literature from others to which it is akin. This spirit, which is the spirit of God, determines the point of view from which all things are considered. They may be interesting for other reasons; but they stand in the Bible, because they are religiously interesting. Once we grasp this clearly, neither inconsistencies nor even conceivable inaccuracies in the historical books will give us trouble any more. These things lie upon the surface, they do not touch the soul. The two great prophetic documents at the basis of the Pentateuch, for example, differ perceptibly in language, in theological conceptions, in other things; but in the spirit

that animates them, and in their interpretation of Israel's past, they are absolutely at one. They both read in the history the progressive march of God's purpose. God with Israel — always in love and often in chastisement — is the theme of both. Another illustration on a small scale, of the essential unanimity of the Biblical writers amid many not unimportant differences, is to be found in the three comments on the fall of Samaria in 2 Kings xvii. Characteristically very little is said of the historical fact, important though it was; but the religious comment is varied and ample. By successive writers "the fall of the northern kingdom is seized upon as a vivid, nay terrible, illustration of the ways of God with Israel. Verses 18, 21–23 find the sin of Israel to consist in 'walking in all the sins of Jeroboam.' Verses 7–20, except 18, trace the calamity to more specific sources, like star-worship and the neglect of the prophetic word. In a later passage still, 34 b–40, the fall of the kingdom is ascribed to the neglect of the *written* word. The chapter shows impressively how the fall of the northern kingdom haunted the minds and imaginations of men who believed in the divine discipline of Israel, and how by different ways they arrived at the conclusion that it corroborated divine justice."[1]

As soon, then, as the dominant religious purpose of the Bible comes clearly into view, all the difficulties which have been the stock-in-trade of the scorner from time immemorial fall into their proper place of comparative insignificance. From this point of view, which is the Bible's own, it is time and labor lost to

[1] See my "Messages of the Historians," pp. 97, 98.

discuss how the serpent could have been erect before the curse upon him, or whether animals could ever have spoken, or what was the length and elevation of the Mesopotamian plain.[1] What we ought to concern ourselves with is what those naratives have to teach us of sin, of the world, of man, of God. It is foolish to make merry over such difficulties as how in Genesis ii. man was made before the animals, while in Genesis i. the order is reversed; but it is equally a sign of little faith and understanding to be afraid of these difficulties. The student who reads the Bible in the spirit in which it was written, will dwell rather on the truth they share in common. Both sources agree alike that man and animals were created by God, and both emphasize, though in different ways,[2] the altogether unique position of man in relation to his maker. It is the duty of the reader to "penetrate through narratives which ignore and belie each other to a central truth which glows through each." [3] Divergences are of great value in enabling us to discover the standpoint and the interests of the various authors, but almost more as suggesting that no undue stress is to be laid upon the words themselves. If a fact which one would suppose must have been so familiar as the superscription on the cross can be rendered by the evangelists in four different ways, it is surely clear that inspiration does not guarantee verbal accuracy.

It is very plain that the New Testament writers,

[1] This last point has played a part in the discussion of the Flood story. Cf. Huxley, "Nineteenth Century," July, 1890, with Gladstone's reply in the last chapter of "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

[2] Gen. i. 27 and ii. 7.

[3] Julia Wedgwood, "The Message of Israel," p. 18.

as a rule, laid little stress upon pedantic precision.[1] Their quotations are often from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew text: sometimes they agree neither with the Hebrew nor with the Septuagint; and once or twice the argument depends upon the Septuagint, even where that is a mistranslation.[2] This may be very unlike what we should expect, but we must learn to conform our expectations to the facts; and these teach us, at the least, how little importance attaches to the words. We must pierce behind the words to the spirit, which no words can perfectly express.

This is a point of great importance, and the Bible becomes a new book to the man who clearly grasps it. Scripture is not merely, as it is often called, a record of revelation: it is itself a revelation of the spirits of the men who wrote it. The historical books, besides recording the history, reveal the faith of the historians. The books are a testimony to the splendid faith which inspired their interpretation of the past, no less than their outlook upon the future. Everything contributes to the divine purpose. The foreign Cyrus is even spoken of as Jehovah's Messiah (Is. xlv. 1), which shows how generous as well as comprehensive is the Biblical conception of history. No movement or event

[1] The subject of Old Testament quotations in the New can be very conveniently studied in Hühn's "Die messianischen Weissagungen," II. Teil; and Dittmar's "Vetus Testamentum in Novo," in two parts, the first containing the references in the Gospels and Acts published in 1899, the second promised for this year (1903).

[2] Cf. Heb. x. 5. "A body didst thou prepare for me." In Psalm xl. 6 the corresponding words in the Hebrew mean, "Ears hast thou digged for me."

in the past had been by accident. The movement which brought Abraham from Babylonia to Canaan was due to a divine impulse. He had not merely wandered westward: according to one source, it was God that had caused him to wander (Gen. xx. 13); according to another, Jehovah had said to him, Get thee out of thy native land (Gen. xii. 1). Neither was it any accident that took Israel to Egypt: it was God who had sent them there for discipline, that, having tasted the bitterness of bondage, they might know the gladness of redemption. And so on through all the history, which is always immeasurably more than a passionless record of objective fact. It is a window into the soul of the historian, through which we see how mighty a faith inspired him in God as the Lord of history, guiding it evermore to a divine event. No criticism of detail can in the least affect the significance of the history as a reflex of the author's faith; and this would still remain to instruct and inspire, even did that history present more difficulties than it does. Inspiration is, as its etymology suggests, a thing of the spirit, and its primary operation was upon the spirits of living men. The men were inspired, rather than the books; and if the books, then the books through the men. The difference, for example, between the Hebrew and the Babylonian stories was ultimately the result of an action of the Spirit of God upon the spirits of particular men.

The purpose of the Bible can be inferred, as we have seen, from the character of its contents. It introduces the spirit of an ethical religion into Semitic tales from which that spirit was practically absent; and it ignores,

as foreign to its purpose, very much of the historical detail which would have been of the highest interest and value to us. In other words, the book is written for the sake of the religion which it enshrines; and it is no doubt intended, as it is fitted, to inspire its readers with the spirit which animates itself. That this was its purpose, or at any rate was felt to be one of its effects, may be gathered from the occasional praises of Scripture that are scattered throughout both Testaments. Besides the famous testimony to its power to reprove, correct, exhort, and instruct, and besides Paul's explicit statement of its character as fitted to inspire us with hope through patience and comfort,[1] there are even in the Old Testament splendid and elaborate tributes to the value of such Scriptures as were then known — tributes which teach us what were the elements in Scripture that constituted its worth and power to those who were most familiar with it. The Psalter opens with its simple assurance that the man in whose heart the Scriptures are will be able to keep his feet when the storms of judgment drive the chaff away. Perhaps in no part of the Bible is its moral and religious function so clearly and lovingly expressed as in the nineteenth and the one hundred and nineteenth psalms. The law of Jehovah gladdens the heart, and lightens the eyes: it is finer than gold and honey. And it is all this, because it is right and pure, and clean and true. It brings the soul home and makes the simple wise. It brings one who feels that he is a stranger upon the earth into blessedness and peace and fellowship with the most high God: it pre-

[1] Rom. xv. 4.

serves him from pride and falsehood, and is as a light shining upon the dark path of his earthly days.

Utterances like these show what it was in the Bible that interested and attracted its earliest students, as the authors of such psalms may without impropriety be called. Their Torah, or Law, of Jehovah consisted of many things; but when they come to sing its praises, it is as a moral and religious force that it is sung. It is great, and worthy to be praised, because it makes for morality and God. "The Bible," says Myers, "is concerned with the formation of man's character through the exhibition of God's."[1] That character is proclaimed by the prophets, it is suggested by the legislation, it shines throughout the history. In every form of its presentation it makes its eloquent appeal to the hardened hearts of men, that, in the language of the New Testament, they may become children of their Father who is in heaven. It is precisely this moral and religious power that is ascribed to it in psalms like these; and they thus explicitly corroborate what the general contents of the Scriptures themselves suggest, that Scripture was preserved, as it was written, for moral and religious ends; and within that sphere lies its special inspiration.

Here, of course, questions of extreme difficulty are raised. It may be urged, on the one hand, that all parts of Scripture do not possess this power equally; and, on the other, that other books, both ancient and modern, also possess it in no inconsiderable measure. In that case, what becomes of the canon, and of the inspiration which is predicated of it? The first of

[1] "Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology," p. 3.

these objections may be conceded. Scripture does not all stand upon the same moral and religious level; and although, in the main, there is a gradual advance from less to more adequate conceptions of God and of the duty He requires of man, that advance is neither steadily nor uniformly maintained. The bitter, violent, and revengeful temper of the late Book of Esther, however intelligible under the circumstances, can only be condemned and deplored by the Christian conscience. We know that this book, together with Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs had a long fight for their place in the canon. Even those who theoretically believe in the equal value of all parts of Scripture unconsciously develop a sort of instinct for the relative religious value of its various parts; this is proved by the naturalness and frequency with which they turn to certain books rather than to others.

Again, it would be idle to deny that in Greek tragedy and philosophy, in Æschylus, Sophocles, and Plato, as well as in much modern literature, there are religious and ethical conceptions of a very noble order, which, in certain directions, it would be very hard, if not impossible, to differentiate from some of the teaching of Scripture. But when every concession has been made that can be made, it remains a simple fact that the Biblical conception of the character of God, taken as a whole, is not approached, far less surpassed, by that of any other literature. Modern religious teachers, whether in prose or verse, will be found to draw most of that which is best in their teaching, if not directly from Scripture, at any rate from that moral and religious atmosphere which has

been created by Scripture; and most of them would be willing to acknowledge this. With regard to the teaching of the classical poets and philosophers, profound and lofty as that often is, the modern religious consciousness is often struck by its coldness, its uncertainty, its inadequacy. They know of the relentlessness of fate, but little or nothing of the love of God. They have no gospel to preach to the poor, and few words of comfort for him that is weary and ready to die. The God of the Bible, on the other hand, is a God of redemption, who in history, in life, in Christ, unceasingly commends His love toward us. There is a distinction between Greek and Hebrew literature, judging each by their noblest representatives, which cannot escape any one who has studied both literatures sympathetically. But it would be idle to deny that there are many utterances in Plato worthy of a place in Scripture, just as it has to be admitted that there are certain utterances in Scripture which fall below the moral dignity of the collection as a whole. "To suppose," says Mr. Montefiore, "that Esther and Ezra are inspired, but that the Republic and the Antigone are not, is revolting to our common sense."[1]

This is all true; yet the limits of the canon, though theoretically open, are practically closed. The books that constitute the canon had already commended themselves supremely to the Church before they were incorporated in a canon. Their incorporation only gave formal recognition to an established fact — the fact of the religious value and power of the books as

[1] "Jewish Quarterly Review," October, 1901, p. 151.

proved by the experience of the Church. It was, on the whole, a happy instinct or rather a kindly Providence that created the Canon of Scripture. In so far as that has encouraged the idea that every book within it differs in kind from every other book without it, it has led to a mechanical view of inspiration; it has fostered Bibliolatry; it has forgotten that God's spirit cannot be imprisoned within books any more than it can be confined to temples made with hands. But there can be little doubt that, however hard, perhaps impossible, in certain cases it may be to justify the distinction between the books within and those without the canon, the practical wisdom of the Church has been shown in drawing the general distinction. Of course no historical decision of this kind can be absolutely binding on subsequent generations; but as that decision or those successive decisions only crystallized the experience of the Church, first the Jewish and then the Christian, and as that experience has been constant and uniform, it may safely be acquiesced in; and it will probably stand as long as the Church itself.

We are at the end of our long discussion, and the result has been to show that criticism in no way imperils a belief in the inspiration of the Bible. It is only when it confines its attention to some of the facts, and these the least important, that it can even seem to do so. But the other facts which a comprehensive study equally forces upon our attention — the acute prophetic consciousness, the extraordinary differences between Hebrew and Babylonian story,

the marvellous unity, in spite of the utmost diversity among the books of Biblical literature, and similar phenomena — can only be explained by the presence within it of such a real influence as is implied by the great term "inspiration." The Bible has been not unaptly described as *a history of salvation.* The former term suggests that salvation is not an abstract thing, apart from human needs and interests, but wrought out, act by act and scene by scene, within the theatre of history. The latter term suggests that the historical facts are charged with divine meaning and purpose. While the religious man is concerned with this inner purpose, it is with those facts, with all the available literary and historical facts, that criticism has to deal. If some of those facts are calculated to give a shock of surprise to one who approaches his study with preconceived notions of what a divine revelation must be, other facts are bound to impress upon him far more vividly and powerfully that strange uniqueness of Biblical literature, which, when every account of it has been given that can be given, has ultimately to be referred to the direct inspiration of Almighty God.

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT GULF FIXED?

THE eagerness with which the critical view of the Old Testament has been repudiated by the supporters of the traditional view suggests that between those views there is a great gulf fixed. If this were true, it would indeed be lamentable; for it would mean that the Christian Church was divided against itself. Almost every representative of both parties — at any rate in Britain and America — stands within that Church; and this it is which constitutes the real pathos of the whole situation. If the critics were all without the Church, careless of her interests and indifferent to her Lord, while their opponents were all within the Church, alone in their devotion to the service of Christ, the situation might be easily and plausibly explained. But it is not so. Many of the critics are conspicuous for the devoutness of their life and the enthusiasm of their service; and if the differences between them and their opponents are irreconcilable, then is the situation sad indeed. But does not this very fact that, in the practical work of the Church they can shake hands, suggest, though it may not prove, that the breach is not really so hopeless as both parties are sometimes tempted to suppose, and

that the things which unite them are more numerous, or at any rate more important, than those which separate them?

It is particularly difficult to discuss the quality of the differences that separate the parties, because, as we have already seen,[1] so many varieties of opinion are represented within the ranks of each. The concessions made by large numbers of those who identify themselves with what, in the main, may be called the traditional opinion, are both numerous and important: many admit the literary analysis of the historical books, an admission vehemently repudiated by others as ridiculous and impossible; and so on. On the other hand, the critics, as we have seen,[2] are by no means the sworn foes of the supernatural. Many believe in it with all their hearts, and express their belief explicitly and unambiguously; many admit, too, that the phenomena presented by Biblical literature are only to be explained by its direct inspiration. When such important concessions are made by each side to the other, it becomes increasingly clear that, if there be not indeed a common standing ground, the more moderate members of both parties are yet not so far apart after all. Though they may differ in method and attitude, yet they hold in common much that is fundamental.

It must, however, be confessed that there has not been on either side much of the spirit of compromise. Antagonism has been frankly accepted by both as the relation subsisting between them. The points of distinction have been pressed, and the points of agree-

[1] Chapter III. [2] Chapter IX.

ment, which are by no means inconsiderable, have been for the most part ignored. Professor Volck of Dorpat, though a representative of the more tolerant phase of conservative opinion, yet maintains that "peace between the two camps is impossible: the gulf which separates them cannot be bridged."[1] Professor Jordan of Kingston, who represents tolerant critical opinion, is of the same mind. "It is no use," he says, "attempting to minimize the difference between the traditional view and the critical treatment of the Old Testament. The difference is immense; they involve different conceptions of the relation of God to the world, different views as to the course of Israel's history, the process of revelation, and the nature of inspiration."[2] Similar is the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Hazard, in his Introduction to the Rev. Isaac Gibson's "Reasons for the Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch:" "As compared with the . . . obsolescent treatment of the Bible that was accepted outside the limited circle of specialists down to within the last two or three decades, the present system is an advance of such profound significance, that the two are nothing short of mutually destructive."[3] So Mr. Gibson himself: "The traditional and critical views of revelation are face to face in open antagonism."[4] Thus it cannot be said that either side has been lacking in candor, or has been eager to cry peace, when there was no peace.

We have no alternative but to believe the represent-

[1] "Heilige Schrift und Kritik," p. 190.
[2] "American Journal of Theology," January, 1902, p. 114.
[3] p. 17. [4] Id. p. 100.

atives of the parties when they emphatically assert their mutual incompatibility; but what if it should turn out that this incompatibility is not so much one of positive religious belief as of standpoint, attitude, and method? Radii from widely diverging points on the circumference will meet in a common centre. But before attempting to show that in some of the most important essentials these diverse views agree, it may be well to consider briefly the main outlines of these views, with their chief characteristics, in spite of the difficulty already alluded to, of summarizing positions which are held by nearly every representative in a way of his own. We shall take the average belief in each case, so far as, amid such variety, one can with any propriety speak of an average belief at all; and we shall touch in the main only the points where they seriously differ.

(i) On the traditional view, the Pentateuch, with the exception of a few verses towards the end of Deuteronomy, was written by Moses, who, in composing the Book of Genesis, may possibly have used and welded together existing documents. Repetitions of incidents are, in the main,[1] to be regarded as real repetitions, not as discrepant versions of the same incident. The stories of the patriarchs certainly, and the stories that precede them very probably, are historical, as much so as the account of the reign of Hezekiah. Similarly the incidents of the wilderness wandering are historically as trustworthy as the account of the

[1] Professor Davis, as we have seen (pp. 16, 17), admits the probability of occasional duplication, but does not believe it to be characteristic.

intrigues by which Jehu succeeded to the throne of Israel. The three codes of law are, in the strictest sense, Mosaic: the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22–xxiii. 33) being preparatory; the Book of Leviticus, with the kindred sections in Exodus and Numbers, an elaborate professional code designed for the priests; and the Book of Deuteronomy, a simple and non-technical presentation of the law for the guidance of the people. The Book of Joshua was written by a contemporary soon after Joshua's death, and has practically all the value of a contemporary document. A similar value attaches to the Books of Samuel and Kings. The Book of Chronicles differs from the two latter books not in its inferior accuracy and reliability, but only in being written from a different standpoint — that of the priest.

The prophetical books are all written by the authors whose name they bear. Each book is complete in itself, and no part of it is to be denied to its reputed author — as is done by criticism in the case of Isaiah — because it does not seem to fit the historical situation of the prophet. For one of the most remarkable things, if not indeed the unique thing, in prophecy is the prophet's power to foretell the future, — not only the very near future, but one that is remote from himself by centuries. In particular do they predict, in what is known as Messianic prophecy, many of the details associated with the life, career, and death of Christ. The Books of Jonah and Daniel are regarded as literal history.

With regard to the Psalms and Proverbs, their authorship is determined by their superscriptions.

Nearly half the Psalter is by David, and the historical notes, which are occasionally found in the superscriptions, indicate accurately the occasion and origin of the psalm. A large element in the Book of Proverbs is from the hand of Solomon, as are also the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. Practically the whole of the Old Testament was completed by the time of Ezra.

(ii) On the critical view of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch was composed at various times and under various influences. Setting aside the Book of Deuteronomy, which was found in 621 B. C., and hardly composed earlier than a century before that, its history rests upon three different documents: two written from a prophetic standpoint, and under slightly different conditions, not earlier than the establishment of the monarchy (*circa* 1000 B. C.), and probably from one to two and a half centuries later; and another from the priestly standpoint, in or after the exile (*circa* 500 B. C.). There are also three strata of legislation, markedly different from each other, corresponding to and emerging out of three different stages of the history: the Book of the Covenant, coming possibly from the time of the early monarchy, in any case not earlier than the Judges; Deuteronomy, which belongs to and reflects, in the main, the spirit and conditions of the seventh century B. C.; and the Priestly Code (including Leviticus and the kindred sections), partly codified in the exile, amplified and modified in post-exilic times, practically fixed, though not in its final form, about the middle of the fifth century, the time about or not long before

which[1] the Pentateuch assumed its existing form by the welding together of its various historical and legislative elements. The part of Genesis that precedes the story of Abraham is hardly history in any sense of the word. The Flood narrative may contain an historical reminiscence, but Genesis i.–iii., vi. 1–4, xi. 1–9, for example, express religious truth in terms of the myth. The patriarchal stories are not, strictly speaking, history, in the sense, for example, that many of the stories of the Judges are history. The figures, all or some of them, may be historic, but prophetic ideas have gathered round them, so that they "become spiritually significant — embody spiritual lessons, or become spiritual types, for the imitation or warning of succeeding generations."[2] The incidents of the wilderness wandering have the value of tradition; in any case, they are the vehicle for the teaching of great moral and religious truths. The Book of Joshua, like the Pentateuch, with which it is associated, rests upon tradition; but it no doubt contains valuable historical material. The books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings were edited to illustrate the lessons inculcated by Deuteronomy, that faithfulness meant prosperity, while apostasy spelt ruin; but much of their material is very old, and has practically the value of contemporary testimony. The Chronicler not only wrote from the standpoint of the priest, but he has modified the material presented to him by Samuel and Kings — in the interests, of course, of a religious purpose.

[1] These statements must, in the nature of the case, be very general.

[2] Driver, "The Old Testament in the Light of To-day," Expositor, January, 1901, p. 40.

A prophetical book is not necessarily entirely written by the man whose name it bears. Old prophecies were adapted to later conditions. Their message was modified so as to be a more appropriate, true, or comprehensive word of God to a later age, when the voice of prophecy was hushed, — a promise, for example, being sometimes added to a prophecy which had once ended in a threat. Further, prophecies which had circulated, for various conceivable reasons, anonymously (cf. Is. xl.–lxvi.) came in course of time to be attached to prophecies whose authors were known, and were thenceforward familiarly known by those names. But the historical situation implied by a prophecy — especially if it be long and detailed enough to justify us in forming an accurate judgment — is the situation out of which it at first emerged, for all prophecy is relevant to its environment. There are times when the prophet foretells the future; but the prediction is not the essence of the prophecy. That is rather preaching, the proclamation of the justice, mercy, and power of God, and the eternal laws of His moral order. No prophet directly predicts details of Christ's life; but the prophetic utterances were justified and fulfilled by the larger facts and by the whole spirit of that life. The books of Jonah and Daniel, which do not occur among the historical books, are not literal history, but the allegorical or parabolic representation of magnificent religious thoughts, — the one illustrating the universal love of God, the other His power to deliver His people.

The superscriptions of the Psalms are seldom, if ever, a guide either to their authorship or to their historical origin. They are no integral part of the

psalms themselves, but represent tradition or the conjectures of later editors. Some psalms — probably, in any case, not many — may be from David; but with the exception of the eighteenth,[1] it is impossible to say with any certainty which are his. Though there are no doubt several pre-exilic psalms and proverbs, the great bulk of both books is post-exilic. Ecclesiastes voices the scepticism and despondency of the third or second century B. C. The canon of the Old Testament was a gradual growth. Only the Pentateuch could be called, in any formal sense, canonical in the time of Ezra. The canon of "the prophets" was determined probably about 200 B. C.; and the rest of the Old Testament, whose position was for a long time less definite and stable, probably about 100 B. C. But what fixed the canon was ultimately no formal and authoritative decision; the books obtained their unique place because they had already proved their power in the hearts of men and in the experience of the Church. They lived because they deserved to live.

It is hardly necessary to remark that this brief sketch of the two opposing schools is not even approximately exhaustive; but it contains the more salient points of distinction, so far at least as the literary results are concerned. Of course the literary results are usually accompanied by other results of an historical nature.[2] If the earlier historical books

[1] Some deny even this psalm to David, *e. g.* Cheyne, Duhm, Wellhausen.

[2] For the sense in which these results may justly be considered apart, see pp. 238–241.

be as late as current criticism claims, the question of their historical trustworthiness is at once raised; for it will hardly be maintained that a narrative which stands over a thousand years from the earliest incident it records, and three or four hundred from the latest, has the value of contemporary history. Again, if the critical view of the date of the priestly part of the Pentateuch is correct, undoubtedly the result is to invert the ordinary reading of the history of Israel. According to that reading, the Pentateuch with its priestly legislation occurs at the very beginning of Israel's national history. The nation was launched on its career with a priestly programme. The prophets follow, and follow at a long interval. The phrase, "the law and the prophets," expresses a chronological truth. On the critical view, however, the law, technically so called, is a product of Judaism; the prophets, at least the more conspicuous, precede the law. This is not the place to attempt either to justify or refute the critical inversion of the history; suffice it to say that the conclusion has been reached by a very minute and extensive study of literary and historical facts. Criticism, of course, would not dream of denying the existence of priestly interests all through the history, nor would it deny that the law was the first part of the Old Testament to obtain canonicity. What it denies is that the prophets were acquainted with the Pentateuch which we know; what it asserts is the priority of the prophets to the law in its present elaborate and literary form.

With that conclusion has usually gone another —

the religious superiority of the prophet to the priest. The priest, it is argued, represents the element that Hebrew religion shares in common with other Semitic religions; the prophet, on the other hand, is peculiar and distinctive to Hebrew religion. It is he, under God, who makes that religion the unique thing it is. He is the man of original ideas, whereas the priest is the man of convention; and the Judaism which was largely created by the priesthood cherished just that legal type of religion which had always been abhorrent to the soul of the great prophets. Such judgments in their extreme form will doubtless have to be qualified. The antagonism between the prophets and the priests, if it be not largely a figment of the critical imagination, cannot have been anything like as keen as it has been the fashion to represent it. In many cases, indeed, those interests are seen to work harmoniously together, and even to be blended in the same persons. They are combined in the Book of Deuteronomy, as well as in the persons of Ezekiel, Haggai, and Malachi; while even on the critical view the Psalter, which is surely, in the main, prophetic in spirit, was preserved, arranged, and edited, if not largely composed, by the temple priests — the very men who, we are given to understand, possessed so little of the prophetic spirit. But after every readjustment has been made which these considerations suggest, it still remains true that on the ordinary view the law appears at the beginning of Hebrew history; on the critical view, it does not appear till Israel has ceased to be a nation and has practically become a church.

It would be idle therefore to minimize the serious

differences between the two views, or to ignore the fact that these differences touch not only the literary, but also the historical, problems. Nay, more. They involve, speaking generally, different views of the relation of God to the world and to man. On the traditional view, the transcendence of God is emphasized. He works upon the world and upon man from without. They are the clay, and He is the potter. They are passive; He moulds them as He will. This attitude has tended in turn to produce a somewhat mechanical conception of inspiration and an inadequate view of revelation. The spirit of man responds to the touch of God as the strings of the harp to the touch of the player: only so, and in no more living way. The truth is superimposed rather than appropriated. So revelation, too, tends to become the imparting of certain dogmas, the reception of which is conceived as necessary to the soul's salvation.

The critical view, on the other hand, emphasizes the immanence of God. He is within the world, and within the souls of men; not only their Creator, but the principle of their life. He reveals His nature not only to and by men, but in and through them, so that the revelation is determined not only by His love, but by their capacity: it will advance as their capacity to apprehend it advances. The prophet's individuality is not suppressed, but rather exalted, by the divine afflatus. The truth which comes to him comes not as a finished dogma, but in living relation to his own spiritual experience, and to his social, political, or religious environment; it has all the warmth of a definite historical situation. Again, God reveals His nature not

only by the words His servants utter, but in the long march of history, so that history itself becomes a revelation, and in its crises and tendencies may be read the purpose and the mind of God.

These views are not indeed mutually exclusive, but each has an attitude of its own, which is conceived to be important and reasonable, and interests of its own which it is especially eager to safeguard. Each emphasizes elements that the other tends to ignore. Transcendence and immanence, dogma and life — in some such terms the conflict might be bluntly stated.

Now, in spite of all that has been said as to the differences, which are neither few nor inconsiderable, between the rival schools, it must be maintained with equal emphasis that they have much — and much that is of fundamental importance — in common. To begin with, each believes — and again we speak of the average representative of the two parties — in the essential unity of the Bible. Doubtless that unity is differently conceived. To the one, all Scripture stands on practically the same level, as it is the Word of God; to the other, it exhibits great varieties of moral and spiritual attainment, because, besides being the Word of God, it is also the word of man. But to the one as unambiguously as to the other it is the Word of God. He is the controlling force in the long movement of which Scripture is the literary reflection; and if the extreme traditional view finds the unity in the equality of all its parts, the critical view regards the unity as that of a living body — the life of the whole being in each of its parts, but the members differing in usefulness and dignity from one another. To both, the theme of the

Bible is God — His ways being made known in the history, His demands in the legislation, His character in the prophecy, the need and joy of fellowship with Him in the Psalms. And all that is as true on the critical view of the Old Testament as on the other.

To both parties, then, Scripture is profitable for teaching. The critical view, recognizing the relativity of the revelation, is not perplexed by the appearance of moral and spiritual crudities. It accepts them as inevitable in a plan according to which men were taught as they could bear. Nay, it finds in the gradual progress of Israel the presence of One whose considerate love for her never slumbered or slept. Thus every stage of the history, every appeal of the prophecy, every yearning of the Psalter, has something to teach us. It is all profitable, on the one view no less than on the other; for on both it is a revelation of God.

It has indeed been common to represent the critical view as antagonistic to the idea of revelation, and of the supernatural generally.[1] This, as we have seen, is not a fair statement of the case. It touches only that class of critics who approach their studies with a bias against the supernatural, and who naturally find what they bring, minimizing the significance of unique facts, or coercing them into their scheme. But so far is the statement from being applicable to all critics, that many of them have earnestly repudiated it. Nay, they have gone further, not only asserting their faith in the supernatural, but maintaining that the phenomena

[1] Higher Criticism is designated a "rationalistic and anti-christian crusade" by Sir R. Anderson, "Daniel in the Critics' Den," p. 4.

of Israel's history are not explicable, unless the supernatural be postulated. Natural development utterly and absolutely fails to account for the incontestable facts of Israel's history and prophecy: the unique phenomena can only be accounted for by the presence of a unique factor. How are we to explain the superb isolation of Hebrew prophecy? asks Professor Davis of Princeton. "Under identical historical conditions, none of Israel's neighbors or kinsfolk among the nations produced religious teaching such as that of Israel concerning God, righteousness, sin, and redemption."[1] His answer is that they received immediate communications from God. The very same point receives admirable emphasis from a representative of the opposite school. "The gradual self-revelation of God to man, while normally working upon the principle of Evolution, or, in other words, while adapted to man's capacity for apprehension, reaches, at certain times, a stage at which the ordinary course of that Revelation is suspended, and an *extraordinary* step is taken, whereby man is placed within reach of a new conception and a new knowledge of God, to which it would have been impossible for him under normal circumstances to attain. . . . When we compare the conception of Yahwe held by the latest of the Nebiim (in the early sense of the word) with that of the first of the 'literary' prophets, the difference is found to be so prodigious, both in *kind*, as well as in *degree*, that it is absolutely impossible to believe that Evolution *alone* can have been the cause of such an advance."[2] Surely

[1] "Presbyterian and Reformed Review," April, 1902, p. 203.

[2] W. O. E. Oesterley, in "Expositor," August, 1902, pp. 94, 95. Yahwe = Jehovah, and Nebiim = prophets.

this is no trivial point. Christianity is usually held to stand or fall with the supernatural; yet not only the supporters of the traditional view, but also all their opponents who are not committed to a philosophical position which denies the supernatural at the outset, agree in maintaining that without it the history and prophecy of Israel are a hopeless riddle. The gulf fixed cannot then be so very great, after all. Here is absolute agreement expressed in the most unmistakable terms on a point which both parties rightly regard as fundamental.

Let us now take the sufficiently crucial question of the patriarchal stories, and ask whether there is any *radical* difference between the attitudes maintained towards them by the opposite schools respectively. An important difference there undoubtedly is. The critics as a whole believe that those stories are largely legendary, and can only be used for historical purposes with the utmost caution and reserve. Their opponents, on the other hand, believe that they are, in the strictest sense, history. We have already discussed some of the reasons which have led the critics to question the historicity of these early stories.[1] In the meantime we are only concerned with the question whether the breach between the opposing parties is as great as it seems to be. Plainly stated, it would seem to be the question of fact *versus* fiction; and to the opponents of criticism the presence of fiction in Scripture would be altogether intolerable.

Now, to begin with, this statement of the antithesis is too blunt. In no case would the patriarchal stories

[1] Chapter VI., pp. 163–173.

be pure fiction. The writers of those stories, assuming that they wrote between the tenth and the eighth century B. C., did not invent them: they found them. They had been on the lips of the people for generations, and they represent at the very least traditions which reach back to a more or less distant past. If their value is no more than that of tradition, neither is it less. They are not deliberate inventions. They are not the creations of imaginative artists. They are, at the least, ancient tradition adapted and interpreted by men of prophetic spirit.

Note, too, by men of *prophetic* spirit. We have already seen that a large section of Hebrew history appears within the canon of the prophets, just as the Book of Jonah, which is in form a narrative, also appears within that canon, though in a different part. The thought is at once suggested that the history is narrated for the sake of the ideas it embodies and illustrates; its extraordinary omissions in some cases, and singularly brief notices in others, of events of the highest political magnitude, are proof enough that the aim of the historian is not so much to record the facts of the history as to illustrate its underlying principles. And this applies to all parts of Hebrew history, to the narratives of the Hexateuch no less than to the more specifically historical books. In any case, then, the real core of a patriarchal story is the divine discipline and purpose which it illustrates. Whence the material came through which the illustration is effected is another question; but even if it should turn out that that material is derived from tradition, the *religious* value of the story would

be in no way diminished, though its historical value would naturally be less. These two elements, however, are quite different, and are too often confused. The historical value of a document depends upon the sources upon which it rests. The Book of Kings, for example, rests in part upon court annals and prophetic biographies; therefore, in addition to the religious lessons which it emphasizes, it sets us directly upon the arena of history. The Book of Genesis, however, is not, in this respect, quite parallel to the Book of Kings. The more distant the sources are from the events, the less confidence, as a rule, can be placed in the history as history; but the religious power and truth of such stories may be nevertheless of the highest. Indeed, Gunkel maintains that the Book of Genesis is a far more religious book than the Book of Kings.[1] The Spirit of God condescended to use fable and allegory in the Old Testament; what was to hinder that same Spirit from using tradition? The material is transfigured by the spirit which shines through it.

Long ago Plato laid down the distinction between moral and historical truth. "We cannot tell," he virtually says, "what the gods and heroes did when they were on earth among men; for in the nature of the case no permanent record could be kept. We should not therefore insist that the myths be historically true. But we have a right to demand that they be morally true; they must on no account be allowed to misrepresent the nature of the gods. If the poets tell us that the gods did a cruel or a wicked or a wan-

[1] Genesis, "Einleitung," II.

ton thing, that is a falsehood which we must reject and dread, as we should dread a loss to our souls; for it is a loss to the soul to believe that the gods can be other than good."[1] And may we not say, following Plato, that the stories of the Old Testament, which deal with very early times and whose historicity has been called in question by some, may yet be admirable vehicles for the presentation of moral and religious truth? Their historicity is to be settled, if it can be, by the evidence; but their spiritual value is not affected by the decision, one way or the other, on the question of the historicity. When Christ introduces a parable with such a definite statement as *There was a certain rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, and a certain beggar named Lazarus*, are we to suppose that He intends to state a definite historical fact? Clearly the truth of the parable does not depend upon the historicity of this statement. Christ is simply giving concrete and pictorial expression to a universal truth. The Pilgrim's Progress is not history, but it is not therefore false. It is true. Its truth, however, is not that of objective, but of inner, fact: it is the truth, not of history, but of moral and religious experience. We do not for one moment mean to suggest that the patriarchal stories are no more historical than the parables or the Pilgrim's Progress; but that, in any case, even supposing their historical value could be shown to be altogether secondary, their spiritual significance would abide unshaken. "Even if all the tales of the Pentateuch," remarks Professor Köhler, "about the great deeds of

[1] Cf. "Republic," II. 377–III. 392.

God during the wilderness wanderings were unhistorical, we could still infer from them what Israel conceived to be possible, on the ground of other experiences, in respect of the power and grace of her God."[1]

We may take this opportunity of saying a word incidentally about the critical attitude to history. It is common to maintain that the critics have evaporated the history. They go to work with what they call the historical method, and end by giving us ideas for facts. The charge, if it were true — and the general critical attitude to the patriarchal stories seems to lend it some plausibility — would be serious; for it would strike at the heart of the Christian religion. That religion rests upon great historical facts; and if they could be obliterated or denied, the ideas with which they have been associated would lose their justification.[2] "Christianity at least," says Professor Sanday, "is definitely historical. The Christian emotions have their roots in certain historical events, and as without these events they would never have come into existence, so also it is not likely that they can be maintained without reference to them. From the days of the primitive Church onwards, we can see that the minds of Christians have been full of one great presupposition. Remove that presupposition, and the rest falls to the ground." With the demolition of the facts would go the destruction of the religion created by them. But just because the facts are of such im-

[1] "Ueber die Berechtigung der Kritik," p. 26.

[2] For some powerful and timely remarks on this subject, see Professor Denney's lecture on "The Gospels and the Gospel" in the "British Weekly," Nov. 6 and 13, 1902.

mense importance, it is necessary to ensure that those on which we build are real facts. Now, while criticism has on the one hand cast doubt upon the historicity of certain sections which have hitherto almost universally passed for history, it has on the other hand emphasized with enthusiasm the facts which have stood the test of its investigations, and it has conclusively shown that certain facts, and these the most important, are unassailable. Apart from some of those facts, the faith and religion of Israel are inexplicable; just as, apart from the resurrection of Christ, the enthusiasm of the early Church is inexplicable. But we must not rest the faith upon an irrelevant foundation. Christianity does not stand or fall with the historicity of the patriarchal narratives. Its truth does not depend upon their truth. It stands or falls with the great facts of the life of Christ, and above all with the fact of Christ Himself. Nothing that could be said of the patriarchal narratives could affect His power to lead men to the Father, or invalidate His claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

It may still be asked whether the patriarchal stories would not lose much, though, as we have seen, they could not lose all, of their religious value, on the assumption that they are unhistorical. To different minds the question will appeal in different ways. There can be no doubt that much of their attraction has been due to their supposed biographical interest. The struggles and temptations, the discipline and attainments, of real persons have an interest and stimulus which, for most men, do not attach in quite

the same degree to imaginary characters. The moral triumphs of real men appeal to our better heart, and provoke us to emulation; the attainments of the hero of fiction do not lay so heavy a burden upon the conscience or touch so powerfully the springs of resolve. There would be exceptions to this attitude, no doubt; but this approximately represents the general opinion of the average man as to the relative influence of biography and fiction. This will be particularly clear if we consider the greatest biography of all — that of Christ. Most people would agree with the Hibbert lecturer who said: "There are some who think that ideals are just as good for all practical purposes as facts, and the charm of the Christ what it is, were the Gospels no more than the most consummate of religious fictions. . . . It seems to me that there is all the difference in the world between a Christ who actually walked the earth in the consummate beauty of holiness, and one who owes the strength and symmetry of his character to vivid ethical imagination and subtle literary skill. The last may still charm and raise and refine those who study him; but the first makes mankind richer, opens out new possibilities to human nature, effectually calls upon all who love him to come up into the mount of God."[1] Fortunately the time has gone by when the life of Christ can be regarded as an imaginative creation: the mythical hypothesis is refuted beyond all possibility of rehabilitation.[2] But the evidence for the patriarchal

[1] Beard, "Hibbert Lectures" for 1883, pp. 418, 419.

[2] Even Schmiedel magnanimously concedes that certain passages "prove that he [*i. e.* Christ] really did exist, and that the Gospels

stories falls immeasurably behind that for the life of Christ;[1] and if it should be made highly probable that the stories were not strictly historical, what should we then have to say? We should then have to say that their religious value was still extremely high. The religious truth to which they give vivid and immortal expression would remain the same. The story of Abraham would still illustrate the trials and the rewards of faith. The story of Jacob would still illustrate the power of sin to haunt and determine a man's career, and the power of God to humble, discipline, and purify a self-confident nature. The story of Joseph would still illustrate how fidelity amid temptation, wrong, and sorrow is crowned at last with glory and honor.[2] The spiritual value of these and similar tales is not lost, even when their historical value is reduced to a minimum, for the truths which they illustrate are truths of universal experience.

In discussing the critical attitude to the Book of Daniel, Dr. Selbie makes some apposite remarks. He assumes — what we have taken the liberty to doubt above — that fictitious characters are ethically as influential as real ones; but with this limitation the argument is a cogent one. "If the personages who figure in the pages of Shakespeare or Goethe exercise an influence as great as if they had been

contain at least some absolutely trustworthy facts concerning him." "Encyclopædia Biblica," vol. ii. col. 1881.

[1] Chapter VI., pp. 166–168.

[2] The permanent religious value of the patriarchal narratives has been attractively set forth by Fulliquet, in "Les expériences religieuses d'Israël," though his treatment does not always conform to the strict demands of the historical method.

flesh and blood, realities instead of being merely the creation of a poet's genius; if Dives and Lazarus and the good Samaritan appeal to us as powerfully as if the incidents recorded of them had actually occurred, why should Daniel lose his moral influence if the narratives concerning him should have to be relegated to the realm of edifying haggādā? Or, to put it still more plainly, if fiction is a legitimate vehicle for conveying moral lessons outside Scripture, is its use to be forbidden within it? Or may we conclude that God, who of old time spoke by divers portions and in divers manners, who found a place in His word for allegory and parable and fable and drama, did not disdain to employ this literary device as well? Shall we presume to exclude a book from the Canon, if its contents should prove to be fiction rather than history? Are we to ignore a writer's purpose and miss the lesson he teaches, because the literary form he employs and which is now found to have been common when he lived, is not what tradition had taught us to expect?"[1] The story of Daniel does not belong to the same class of literature as the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the argument, with the necessary modifications, would hold. We are very far from maintaining or believing that the patriarchal stories are fiction; but the point is that, even if they were, then, though their stimulus to action might not be quite so great, yet whatever moral and religious truth they possess on the assumption that they are historical would remain absolutely unaffected.

Here the critics and their opponents are essentially

[1] "Critical Review," March, 1902, pp. 111, 112.

at one. While the latter accept and the former doubt the strict historicity of those narratives, both believe that they are the vehicle of great spiritual truths. Both believe in the educative religious value of the stories. Both believe in their power to impress those who read them with lofty and inspiring truths about the ways of God with man. These things in any case constitute the essence of the narratives, and in these things they agree. The gulf between the two is surely, therefore, not impassable.

It is hardly possible to over-emphasize the importance of this point, that the positive religious content of Scripture remains untouched by critical methods, and is, to say the least, as real and effective on the critical as on the traditional view. Criticism has made considerable readjustments in the chronological setting of the literature; but it has not affected, and cannot affect, the substance of it. Probably it would be difficult to distinguish — except in wholly incidental touches — whether a sermon on some narrative in Genesis was preached from the critical or the traditional standpoint. The preacher who repudiated critical methods and results would have much the same to say as the preacher who accepted them. They would both be interested in those features of the story which were "profitable for teaching." They would differ, and might differ very seriously, in the place they would assign to the story in Hebrew literature. The one might regard it as composed by Moses on the basis of ancient documents, which had the practical value of contemporary testimony; the other might believe it to have been written four hundred

years after Moses was in his grave, and to have been subject to all the fluctuations of oral tradition for centuries. But in the pulpit neither of them is called to express his opinion on the literary origin of the story. The preacher's business is to expound the religious truth which it suggests, and only in this way does he co-operate with the purpose for which the story was written. Both parties could shake hands over such an admirable exposition of the stories as is to be found in Professor Dods' "Genesis" in the "Expositor's Bible" series. Literary questions are for those whom they concern; but it is not for such discussions that the people assemble themselves together in the house of God on the Sabbath day. They come to worship God, and to be perfectly furnished unto all good works. The preacher should live with the historian or the prophet till his heart is kindled into something of the faith that glows in their words; it should then be his passion to kindle that faith in the hearts of those who listen to him. Though the critic, as a critic, has to deal with literary and historical questions, as a preacher he is concerned only with the religious message of the passage he has selected; and there is no reason why that message should not be as dear and impelling to him as to the preacher who cares nothing for critical methods and results. In truth, the message to both is the same. There is no gulf fixed.

Take, again, an illustration from the prophets. Isaiah is regarded by criticism to-day rather as an anthology than as a book. The late Professor Davidson's volume on that prophet in the "Temple Bible"

series is a valuable proof that this is a reasonable, if not an inevitable, view of the book; for Professor Davidson was not only a noble scholar, but a scholar of altogether remarkable and almost proverbial caution. But the fact that a book supposed for centuries to be a literary unit is divided by most modern scholars among a number of authors living at different times, varying in their gifts, and appealing to dissimilar situations, does not by one jot or tittle impair the religious value of the book. Each section has its own message, whose importance depends not upon its date, but upon its truth. If it be a real message, it matters not whether it be pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic. If a prophet breaks the silence with his *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people*, the preacher will read on till he begins to understand the situation of those by whom the message was needed, and to whom it sounded too good to be true. If, after an impartial and exhaustive study of the situation, he can, without violence to his intellectual conscience, believe that these words could have been spoken by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, to his contemporaries, and could have stood in living relation to them and their needs, good and well: if he believe that there is no relevance or reality about these words unless they were spoken to broken-hearted exiles, also good and well. But in either case the passage contains a gospel, the gospel of the pity, the grace, the love of God, to be manifested — in a year or two on the one view, in a century and three-quarters on the other — in redemption from captivity. No readjustment of the date in the least affects this, which is the core of the message. Criticism, in plac-

ing the bulk of the last twenty-six chapters within the exile, has not dreamt of depriving the section of its religious value, and could not do so if it tried. Indeed its claim has rather been that it has shown how marvellously high that value is by showing the need, the relevance, and the originality of the message. But without here insisting on such claims, it is enough to maintain that every section of prophecy has an indefeasible religious value of its own, totally unaffected by questions of literature, history, or chronology. The positive religious message is the same for every interpreter, whether he accept the critical conclusions or not.

Perhaps no part of the Old Testament has so thoroughly divided scholarly opinion as the Psalter. On the dates of certain psalms scholars differ by almost a millennium; and many have been the disputes as to whether the speaker in the Psalms is an individual or the Church.[1] But here again it must be emphatically said that no decision either way, on such questions, affects the religious value of the psalm, which is essential, inherent, and indestructible. Place the psalm where you will, in the tenth century B. C. or in the second, it does not cease to be the expression of a human spirit in the presence of its God. Adoration is adoration, and penitence is penitence, whether on the lips of David on the throne or of an exile by the waters of Babylon.

[1] Engert, who has made the most recent contribution to this question in his "Der betende Gerechte der Psalmen" (1902) concludes that the "I" of the Psalms is always to be interpreted of the church, "the true Israel."

Take, for example, so dear and familiar a psalm as the twenty-third. The Psalm is ascribed to David; but it would be no less powerful if it had come to us without any superscription at all. Doubtless it would gain a little, a very little, in definiteness, and the character of David would be beautifully illustrated on the side of its simple, tender trust, if the psalm were certainly his. But that is all. If it is not his, it is somebody's; on any view of its authorship or origin, it will continue to the end of time to express in terms of majestic simplicity the quiet confidence with which one who knows Jehovah to be the Shepherd of his life can face even the valley of the deep shadow. It expresses the fearless and abiding joy of one who knows himself to be the guest of God. So with the fifty-first Psalm. The natural interest of this psalm has been greatly heightened by the belief that it was the song in which David expressed his penitence after his tragic fall; and many have revived, through its words, their own hope in the pardoning grace of God, under the idea that it was written by one who had been guilty of exceptionally aggravated sin. But the power of the psalm to awake and express penitential feelings in the forlorn heart does not depend upon its author having committed two of the blackest sins that ever stained a royal career. If criticism is right in regarding the psalm as "a prayer for the restoration and sanctification of Israel in the mouth of a prophet of the exile,"[1] it will still be used by the Church

[1] W. R. Smith, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 441."

collectively and by her sons individually as the classic expression of their penitence. The poet who composed the psalm, whether to voice his own penitence, or that of the church whose fortunes he shared, had tasted in his own soul the horror of sin, and longed with longing unspeakable for the clean heart, the right spirit, and the joy of salvation; and every other soul which has known that horror and yearned for that salvation can make these words its own. It would indeed add much to the historical interest of the psalm could we discover with certainty its occasion. It is the duty of criticism to attempt this discovery; but even if it be not effected, the religious value of the psalm is undiminished. Professor Kautzsch has said — and no one will accuse him of being indifferent to critical interests — "How idle the dispute about the inscriptions is, must be especially clear to one who uses the psalms for the purpose for which they were collected! What in all the world has the inexhaustible power of songs like Psalms 23, 90, 103, 121, 127, and many others to do with the question whether some post-exilic redactor did or did not err in his ascription of them to David or Moses or Solomon?"[1]

It is abundantly clear, then, that criticism leaves the religious message of the various sections of Scripture absolutely intact. It may show that an historical book is composite which was supposed to be an original unity. It may show that a prophecy which has usually been regarded as a unity is in reality an anthology. It may revolutionize the tradi-

[1] "Abriss," p. 128.

tional chronology of Hebrew literature. But it does not affect the religious content of the literature itself. With all its argument about a book, it cannot argue the book out of existence; after it has said its last word, the book remains as a fact, a religious no less than a literary fact. Its message may not hold the same place in the development of revelation which we once supposed it to hold; but it is there — albeit in another place — as a positive, indestructible fact. It expresses the faith or aspiration or penitence of a human heart, and it does so none the less though we may not even know the century within which that heart beat.

"No readjustment," said Robertson Smith with reference to the words of the Bible, — "no readjustment of their historical setting can conceivably change the substance of them."[1] And that is a truth which, in the present vexatious controversy, should never be forgotten. It is quite true, and no attempt need be made to conceal it, that the differences between the traditional and the critical view are "immense;" but it is equally true that those differences do not touch the religious essence of Scripture: they affect questions of method, of standpoint, of history, of chronology, of literature. But in points that are vital to the faith both parties — the supporters of the older view and the critics who are not biassed by a theory — are in perfect harmony. Both believe that the Bible is the record of a unique revelation of God; that it could not be what it is unless by His direct inspiration; that it is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in right-

[1] "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 19.

eousness; that it is potent to mould "man's character through the exhibition of God's;" or, in the language of the Bible itself, that it can furnish a man completely unto every good work. Is the gulf, then, so very great after all?

CHAPTER XII

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CHURCH

More than two hundred and fifty years have passed since the Westminster Assembly recommended that "ordinarily one chapter of each Testament should be read at every meeting" of the congregation for the public worship of God. The practice of reading from both Testaments is common to all the churches which owe their confession to that Assembly, and, indeed, to most of the English-speaking churches, and the recommendation of the Westminster divines but gives formal expression to a practice almost as old as the Christian Church. But, widespread as is the feeling that the New Testament not only does not move in a radically different world from the Old, but is only its completion and crown, and that the Old Testament may fairly be reckoned among the Scriptures of the Christian Church, this feeling has never been universal, either in the ancient or the modern world. There have always been men who have felt, more keenly perhaps than was right, the contrast between the law which was given by Moses and the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ; sects in the ancient world which believed that the God of the Old Testament was not gracious but cruel, that He was

not revealed but abolished by Christ; churches in the modern world which content themselves, as many do in Germany, with publicly reading selected portions of the Gospels and Epistles. And even those who have a keen enough historical sense to see that the separation of the Old and New is impossible, have yet to confess to a lurking sympathy with the tendency to relegate the Old Testament to the background and to bring into prominence the New, and not even all of the New, but only those parts of it which are more directly concerned with the sayings and doings of our Saviour, — a tendency which seeks to find its justification partly in the unsettled and unsettling state of Old Testament criticism, partly in the growing apprehension of the person of Christ as the ultimate authority for the Christian conscience. We find ourselves then face to face with the question: Standing as we do in the full brightness of the revelation of Christ, holding as we do that the truth which He teaches is final, are we in a position to dispense with the Old Testament, or have those churches been right which have sought to reinforce their faith and hope through psalm and prophecy no less than through epistle and evangel?

History has decided in favor of the retention of the Old Testament; and her judgment will abide so long as men have hearts to be thrilled by the record of the communion of the living God with His people of old, or minds to see how all that was good in the Old has been preserved, even when it has been transformed by the New. In particular we may claim for the Old Testament a twofold value — absolute and relative. It

lives both because of what it is in itself and because of that for which it prepared the way, and which without it would have been impossible. It is, perhaps, too much the fashion to accentuate the latter and to minimize the former. To take a large view of the redemptive purpose of God for humanity is, no doubt, to see the Old Testament in its preparatory or preliminary aspect; it did not bring that purpose to fulfilment, but by its repeated failures pointed men to something more strong and saving than itself. But it had its triumphs as well as its failures, and to look at the slow but sure historical process by which God disciplined the people of Israel is to see in the Old Testament one continuous triumph, for it is the undying proof that God was never very far from His people, but sought them without ceasing, sometimes in the joy with which He touched their hearts at festivals, sometimes through the insight of a seer whose eyes were opened to read the riddle of the past, sometimes in the stern and lofty rebuke of a prophet, sometimes in the tender, plaintive notes of a psalmist whose heart was breaking with penitence for his own sin or with shame for the sin of his people. Sternly or gently, God's voice can be heard through every period of Israel's history, the most sinful and the most forlorn. When there is "no more any prophet" in the land, there is sure to be a psalmist who strengthens his sorely tried faith and hope in God by looking back to the salvation which He wrought for His people in the days of old. There is no part of the Old Testament in which we cannot see the finger of God, shaping the institutions which were in part to

determine the practice of the Christian Church, writing His will on the tables of the heart and conscience, moulding the men who were to declare His purpose. Were there no New Testament, with its perfect revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Old Testament might yet in its own way bring us into the presence of God, show us God moving through history, and working in the deep places of the human heart. It can not only refresh, but satisfy, the soul that lives in it and by it. Its power to give comfort and strength and peace, and to lead men into the secrets of God, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Men whose hearts had only responded in joy or humility to the written or spoken word, but had not yet been thrilled by the sight of the Word become flesh, knew it to be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path,

> "More to be longed for than gold,
> Yea, than fine gold in plenty,
> Sweeter than honey,
> Even honey that drops from the comb."

To our Saviour it was no less dear than to the men of the older time. Though His communion with the Father was direct — for He and the Father were one — yet when He voices the deepest thoughts that move Him, it is not seldom in words consecrated by age and by the experience of holy men of God. Most of all do the words of Scripture rise to His lips in solemn, lonely, or tempestuous hours: when tempted of the evil one in the wilderness, when face to face with the false justice of an earthly tribunal, when founding that sacrament which was to keep His re-

demptive work ever before the eyes of men, when passing from the shame and cruelty of earth to the peace of His Father in heaven. Throughout the almost unbroken tragedy of His ministry the Old Testament was His comfort and stay.

And what it was to Christ it has been since to those that loved Him. They have felt that the sublimest teaching of the New could not wholly supersede the Old, that in certain directions the Old has been able to help them even more than the New. In the Old we see a people small in numbers but great in meaning and possibilities, marching down the centuries like an army of God; we see how that, by the grace of the God who specially loved it, it rose from the heathenism in which it began and by which it was surrounded, and won its way through the purifying fires of persecution, war, and exile into clear and spiritual conceptions of God; how that God, never leaving Himself without a witness, raised up patriarchs, judges, kings, psalmists, prophets, priests, and would not let His people go until He blessed them. There is no history like the history of Israel for convincing us of the transcendence of God, and no book like the Old Testament for teaching us the inner meaning of history. And scarcely less wonderful than the vastness of the divine purpose realized through Israel is the romance of the incidents, and the charm of the domestic and social life through which it is unfolded. That purpose works itself out in a world so full of simple beauty, so rich in all that is touchingly human, in all the tender charities of home and friendship and love, that we feel as if the

varied life that moves before us is not the product of a distant land and time. Though the field over which the story takes us is only a few scores of miles, there is nothing petty or local about it; it is so splendidly human, and speaks home to the hearts of all men.

Again, there is a sense in which the prophets stand nearer to modern needs, and mean more for our time, and especially for the preachers of our time, than the apostles do. The prophets breathe a freer air. Most of them lived at times in which preaching had, or at least might not unreasonably be expected to have, some practical effect on politics. They spoke their fearless words to men who had still in part their political destiny in their own hands. They believed that their message, if obeyed, would conserve the national prestige, if not power, and give the people a place worthy of the calling wherewith God had called them. While trembling with pity and sorrow at the thought of the overthrow which the moral corruption of the nation had made so certain, their despair is often redeemed by a certain latent belief in national possibilities, a belief which the course of the subsequent history foreclosed to the New Testament writers, before whose eyes the political greatness of Israel lay too surely prostrate. This was no doubt in part a gain, concentrating men's minds, as it did, on moral and religious relations which abide amid all change of political form. But it was a gain that involved a loss. In the New Testament the nation as a nation has all but ceased to be. In the great period of Old Testament history life is still moving freely and vigorously among the problems created by the

political relations of the time. The prophets present us with a vivid transcript of political life ; the apostles have none to transcribe. The fiery rebukes of the prophets have often a strangely modern sound ; for the civilization which they feared would work ruin to the people and the religion of Jehovah sprang from the same sources, was permeated by the same principles, and created the same problems as the more complex civilization of modern times. In the burning words which they hurl at the carelessness and licentiousness of society, at the heartless ceremonialism of priests and people in their worship of God, at the polished selfishness and cruel luxury of the rich, we might almost fancy we heard the voice of a twentieth-century preacher whose heart was aflame with love to God and the people.

And if the prophets teach us how to relate religion to public life, we learn from the Psalms, as we could hardly learn even from the New Testament, to enter into the sanctuary of our hearts and commune with God as with a friend. In the Hebrew Psalter men have poured out their hot hearts to God. Heights of joy, depths of penitence and anguish, resolution and failure, thanksgiving and confession, every experience of the soul is here anticipated, expressed, and, above all, related to God, in whom alone the weak found their refuge and strength, and in whose light men saw the mysteries of human life, if not with perfect clearness, yet clearly enough to fill their hearts with quietness and confidence. Here are the prayers that teach us to pray, the songs on which men and nations have modelled their praises, the confessions that inspire and

express our penitence. In the Psalter the human spirit in all the checkered possibilities of its experience lies in the presence of God. There is no mood, whether of depression, struggle, or triumph, which does not here find its reflex and expression. The range of its sympathy has made it the comfort of men in persecution, their inspiration in struggle with foes within and without, the hope and stay of their dying hours. It is not without a deep and suggestive truth that the Psalms are sometimes bound up with copies of the New Testament. Consecrated by centuries of Christian experience, and filled by the coming of Christ with a richness of meaning which they could never have had for those who first wrote and sang them, the Psalms belong almost more truly to the Christian than to the Jewish Scriptures. The most convincing testimony to the absolute value of the Old Testament is just the experience of the Christian and the pre-Christian world.

But it has a further value as ancillary or preparatory. We have just seen that it was not only a means, but an end. We have now to regard it not as an end, but rather as a means. It prepared the way for the Testament by which it was transcended, though not superseded, and for Him whose coming marks a new departure, and yet was no less truly conditioned and directed by all that had gone before. In many ways it is more important to recognize the continuity between Judaism and Christianity than the breach between them. Some Judaism is practically Christian, some early Christianity is still Judaic. There are passages in the Old Testament, like those which

describe the suffering servant, that help us to feel that the glory of the New Testament lies not so much in teaching us a deeper secret, or a new way, but in bringing us into living fellowship with One who was Himself the way; and there are tracts of the New Testament so near to the Old in form and spirit that they have been supposed to be a product of the older time. Christ belongs to both Testaments. His presence in either is no surprise; both find their justification and unity in Him. Christianity is Judaism transfigured by Christ. Thus to study the Old Testament by itself, without regard to the teaching and person of Him to whom it points and in whom it culminates, is the most unscientific thing that we could do. It is to assume that we can know the significance of a process apart from the result which alone explains it. It is to move on a way that leads nowhere, because we do not know where we are going. We are children of the New Covenant, our faith rests directly on the teaching of the New Testament. But on what does that rest? What would the New be without the Old? Historically impossible; and the New loses much even of its religious value when divorced from that with which it is historically continuous; for the religion and the history cannot be separated without loss to both. There is not a page of the New Testament which will not clothe itself in fresh beauty and power when it is historically related to the antecedent life and thought of the Jewish people. Indeed, much of the New Testament is practically a dead letter to one who chooses to ignore its historical relations. Few would pretend that the Apocalypse or the Epistle to

the Hebrews will yield their richest meaning to one who does not trace them to their roots in the symbols, the laws, the institutions of the Old Testament. And what is so palpably true of these books is true, in its own measure, of every book of the New Testament, Epistle and Gospel alike. The great scheme elaborated by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans is based upon a certain view of the early history of our race as recorded in the Old Testament and supported by statements from psalm and prophecy. Even the parables of the Gospels, whose simplicity and naturalness come home to the untrained mind with matchless power, gain in clearness and force when we know something of the national life and mind from which they sprang. Who, for example, were those heartless people that passed pitilessly by the man who was set upon by robbers on the way to Jericho and who lay bleeding and prostrate on the wayside? And who was it that bound up his wounds, and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn? Half the beauty and more than half the sting of this parable are lost upon those who do not see its Old Testament background. If to understand the poet we must go to the poet's land, so, to appreciate the many-colored life that lies before us in the pages of the New Testament, the evangelists and the apostles and Him whose life they set forth, and whose gospel they bring into relation to the needs and problems of their time and implicitly of all time, we must go to their land and study the influences which made them what they were. In the Old Testament lie revealed all the elements of that life which, on its better side, prepared those who

were waiting for the consolation of Israel to receive the Christ when He should come, — Simeon, Anna, the glad-hearted shepherds in whose ears rang the angels' song, and the little band that shared our Saviour's toils and passion; and which, on its worse side, developed into the cant, the formalism, and the heartlessness against which Christ had to hurl His woes. The roots of the New are in the Old; what we see in the transition is rather a development than a revolution. Some of Christ's words, indeed, point to the recognition of a breach between the two epochs which His own person divided. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached." But He is more impressed with the continuity than with the breach. His promise of life to those who do what is written in the law sounds almost as if there were no difference between the two dispensations; to believe in Moses and the prophets with heart and soul ought to carry men on further to belief in Himself. He criticises the old covenant with the firmness of one who speaks with authority, but also with the tenderness of one who felt that it was a true word of God, though conditioned as it could not but be by the hardness of men's hearts, and by the rudimentary conditions of ancient society. He thus at once confirms and transforms the Old Testament; what it needed and received from Him was not so much contradiction as correction, not so much correction as completion.

His work is not destructive; it is a revelation of the spirit which moved the holy men of old, freed from the limitations of temper and environment by

which they were bound. In a deep sense His message was the same as theirs. On love to God and to man hang all the law and the prophets; on that love, too, hangs His own gospel. His relation to the literary record of the past of His people was one of sympathy and appreciation, not of antagonism. When God spake unto us in a Son, it was not to refute, but in the main to corroborate, to deepen, to expand, the earlier messages He had given to the prophets in divers portions and in divers manners. This question of the relation of the Old Testament to Christ is a fundamental one. If that relation could be disproved, it would be difficult to justify the prominence given to the study of the Old Testament in the theological colleges of the Christian Church. Nothing could ever prevent it from being the book which enshrined the greatest religion of the past; but in a Christian college it is not enough that a book on which so much time and effort are expended be religious; it must be implicitly, if not explicitly, Christian. If in the New Testament Christ has come, in the Old He is coming; if in the New we see Him, in the Old we hear Him. It is perhaps more difficult to understand the Old Testament apart from Christ than Christ apart from the Old Testament. The result sheds light on the process, shows what it meant and whither it tended. No doubt there are moments in which one cannot but sympathize with Schleiermacher when he confesses "I can never consider this effort to prove Christ out of the Old Testament prophecies a joyful work, and am sorry that so many worthy men torment themselves with it."

Much may be lost, and little, if anything, gained, by seeking in the Old Testament for the Christ whom we find in the New, with all the rich detail of a historic personality. We must look with generous eyes, not dwelling upon the letter, which killeth, if we would find Him. But it is Christ Himself who tells us that He is the goal of Old Testament Scripture; it is He of whom Moses spake, and all that is written concerning Him in law, prophecy, or psalm must be fulfilled. In Him the purpose of God which before Him was partially veiled, though growing in clearness, became manifest; what more natural, what more scientific, than to carry our knowledge of this purpose, revealed by and in Christ, back into our interpretation of that history and thought which but partially revealed it? In this sense Christ is present in the Old Testament, and He is the light thereof; we trace Him, not in minute predictions of place and time, but in the hearts of men and in the course of history. Scripture has been well defined as "the record of the redeeming activity of God, culminating in the history of the Redeemer." The Redeemer explains the redemption. If it was formerly the fashion to see too much in the Old Testament, and to force it to speak to us in the language of the ripe Christian consciousness, it is now perhaps the custom to see too little, and to dwell more upon its kinship with the cognate Semitic religions than upon its latent Christianity. To do it justice we must know what spirit it was of; and to know that, we must learn of Him in whom that spirit found its perfect expression.

The presuppositions of our Christian faith are not the axiomatic truths we sometimes take them to be; they are all historically dependent upon revelations granted to men whom God raised up from time to time for the special purpose of making known His way and will, upon truths preserved with tenacity by select souls amid periods of indifference and opposition. Take, for example, the elementary truth that God is one, the belief that is the radical condition of all religious progress. That belief, simple as it is, has a background of warfare and pain; it sums up the history from the days when the ancestors of the Hebrew people left their own land for the land of promise, down to the days when the clearer revelation of God to Moses broke upon them as they were girt with the idolatry of Egypt, and perhaps to days later still. Or take the truth that God is moral and cares more for righteousness than for splendid ceremonial. Simple as it seems to men who have been taught the inwardness of true religion, it was neither simple nor credible to the average Hebrew of the eighth century B. C. It required the thunder of an Amos to remind him that God despised his sumptuous offerings, and would punish him for his iniquity. Or take the truth that God is gracious. That is not a distinctively New Testament truth, though the grace of God is seen in its perfection only in Jesus Christ; it was revealed in general by the whole course of Israel's history, especially at great crises, when by a more than human might the nation and the religion which it represented and shielded were preserved from the perils which threatened their destruction; and in

particular, by the more definite word of God to the psalmists, whose hearts He had touched with the blessed consciousness of sin forgiven, a consciousness as real and glad to the men of the old as of the newer time; and to the prophets, who were fond of comparing the watchful love of God over Israel with the care of a shepherd for his flock. Or take the truth that God is the God of all men. Here we seem to be on peculiarly New Testament ground, moving in a sphere of thought created for us by Jesus Christ. Yet it is not quite so; at more than one stage there is an implicit universalism — in the opening chapters of Genesis, which are characterized by a large-hearted humanity; in the Book of Proverbs, which has guided the life of Western men as well as of Orientals; in psalms, like the sixty-seventh and the hundredth, in which the salvation of God is ideally related to all men. One distinguished scholar confesses that the study of the Old Testament, with its magnificent breadth of sympathy, fostered and deepened in him a love for missions. Or take the truth of the life beyond death. Here we miss the massive strength and assurance of New Testament doctrine, nor could we expect it till the coming of One who had plainly robbed the grave of its victory. And yet, in the tender voices of men whose hearts tremble with hope in the God who had been the light of their life, we mark plainly enough a preparation for the clear, strong assurance of Christ, that God is the God of the living. All that is deepest and dearest in our faith comes from the New Testament; and every great truth of the New Testament finds its historical preparation and support in the

Old.[1] What, therefore, God and Christ have joined together, let not man put asunder.

Such, then, is the place of the Old Testament in our faith, and a position corresponding to its importance to our faith must the study of it hold in every school of learning which professes to train men for the ministry of Christ and His Church. But, while a clear view of the task to be performed is the first requisite to the successful performance of it, it also brings us face to face with the necessity of selecting a method which will conserve all the interests at stake. A great French critic remarked that it was at once "the privilege and danger of Semitic studies to touch on the most important problems of the history of humanity." It is the privilege — for the greatest study of mankind is God, with the religion, the people, the Christ through whom He has made Himself known; and the danger — for here the sin that so easily besets is the temptation to traditionalism on the one hand, and on the other to a rash disregard of the gathered experience of the past. But so long as we remember that the true end of all our study of the Old Testament is religious, in the great words of St. Paul, "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work;" so long as we recognize that sound criticism cannot deprive us, and does not seek to deprive us, of the substance of the revelation, but strives merely to set it in its own light, we shall see that we have everything to gain and

[1] A simple, but scholarly treatment of this point will be found in G. A. Barton's "The Roots of Christian Teaching as found in the Old Testament."

nothing to fear from the application of a rigorously scientific method. While the criticism of the Old Testament is not of yesterday, the pressure of its problems has never been so keenly felt as to-day; and it would be fighting with the spirit of our time and of our God to reject, in the study of His word, those principles and methods which have widened our knowledge and deepened our wonder in the study of His world. The problems of the Old Testament were not created by the critics, but by the facts; they are felt, not only by the professional scholar, but by every one who reads his Bible with ordinary care and with an open mind. What we have to do in the interests of our faith is not to suppress the problems — indeed we cannot — but to face them, and if possible to solve them. Many of the old landmarks have been removed, but the land remains, every inch of it. It may have to be redistributed; but its redistribution will only make it a more real possession, by giving us order for confusion. Reconstruction cannot destroy the history; it can only make it more lucid and helpful. Criticism is only a means, to be everywhere — at least in Biblical scholarship — subordinated to a moral and religious end. Its aim is constructive; the need for it is imperative; the result of it is to make many a rough place plain, and to remove many a stumbling-block from the path of honest doubt. But the criticism that will do that for us must be a sane criticism, which knows its own limitations, which will not mistake caprice for logic or substitute theory for fact. It will recognize that behind the history and the literature with which it is its province to deal, are

the throbbings of a life which it cannot explain but must accept, and that the criticism which would truly interpret the literature must be possessed of the same spirit which inspired it. Our search for truth is sustained by Christ's promise of the Spirit who leads into all the truth.

In our search we shall be grateful for any help from any quarter, whether from the ruins of a buried city, the fragments of a broken gravestone, the monuments of a forgotten people, or the conjectures of criticism. All that makes the Old Testament live is a contribution to history, and therefore to faith. "If the Church wants to be saved," remarks a prominent clergyman of the Church of England, "it must become contemporary." True, in the sense that religion can only be vital when it relates itself to contemporary needs and forces: true, in the sense that the principles of religion have to readjust themselves to the changing conditions of social life. But if the Church wants to be saved, she must also continue to be historic, to recognize that while Christianity is as a mighty tree, that grows mightier with the ages, her roots are deep in the past. Her life is not separable from the redemptive activity of God in the history of that people through whose mediation He purposed to bring men in the fulness of time into saving communion with Himself; and for us that activity is not now separable from the record of it, that is, from the Old Testament. We shall not gain the present by throwing away the past. The power of a ministry to mould the time into which God has sent it will largely depend upon the depth of its knowledge of the past

on which its faith is built, and on the richness of its sympathy with the spirit which shaped it. That criticism will be most welcome which will present the history in its most reasonable sequence, and most satisfactorily justify the ways of God to men. It will have at once the impartiality of science, and the bias which is forced upon the careful student by a true interpretation of history. But though the method must be scientific, the interests at stake are not only, nor even mainly, scientific, but religious, indeed Christian; the end is not knowledge, but increase of faith through the scientific presentation of knowledge. And this end will be best attained by the exercise of courage and of caution: of caution — for the way is not always as clear as it might be; of courage — for the ground beneath our feet is firm.

Such studies as these must be pursued with a reverent regard for all that is good, whether it meet us in the present or the past. They will not needlessly clash with the ripe experience or reasoned convictions of the past, neither will they repudiate the obligation to research to which the wider knowledge and progressive spirit of our day have bound us. Our study of the Old Testament will be guided by two considerations: First, that it is old, and therefore demands the most careful and scientific treatment from an age which prides itself on looking at things in their genesis and growth. But far more important for us is the consideration that it is a Testament, a covenant between the living God and living men, through which, in words borrowed from the opening paragraph of the Westminster Confession, "it pleased the Lord at

sundry times and in divers manners to reveal Himself and to declare His will unto His Church, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world." But the most strenuous study and the most probable conclusions will be sobered by the reflection that the work of our own age is in all likelihood no more final than that of the age which our work tends in part to supersede. But though not final, it is not therefore futile. Every age has its own work to do, its own truth to learn and appropriate. The future will owe much to the earnest effort of the present, as the present owes much to the toil and sincerity of the past; and we shall be well content to play our little part in the unfolding of that truth which advances with the centuries, and thereby show ourselves true children of the God who is " patient, because He is eternal."

APPENDIX

OUTLINE OF THE RESULTS OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

It is obviously impossible to sketch and summarize even the main results of Old Testament criticism within the compass of a paragraph or two; yet, for the sake of those who have no time to follow the argument into its complicated detail, it may be worth while to present, though necessarily in the briefest outline, the leading points of that argument.[1]

One of the books which has played a radical part in Old Testament criticism is the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, who prophesied during the earlier part of the exile (592–570 B. C.). The last nine chapters of his book (xl.–xlviii.) constitute a programme — ideal in parts — for the regulation of the worship after the exile is over; and laws are laid down which are not always in harmony with the corresponding laws of the Pentateuch. The discrepancies are undeniable: so real are they, indeed, that at one time the right of Ezekiel to a place in the canon was disputed, and, as the Jewish story runs, its place was only assured when a great scholar, after consuming "three hundred measures" of midnight oil, succeeded in reconciling the discrepancies. Now, if the Pentateuch was already in ex-

[1] Cf. Gladstone, "Impregnable Rock," ch. v.: "It seems but common equity that we, who stand outside the learned world, and who find operations are in progress, which are often declared to have destroyed the authority of these ancient books, should be supplied, as far as may be, with available means of rationally judging the nature and grounds of the impeachment. And it is unfortunate that this has been little thought of; and that, while we are, it may almost be said, drenched with the deductions and conclusions of the negative critics, it is still so difficult, in multitudes of instances, to come at any clear view of the grounds on which they build."

istence with its elaborate regulation of the worship, which, as is repeatedly said, was to be valid for all time, why should Ezekiel have thought it necessary to lay down any such programme at all? And why should his programme differ, in certain material respects, from a book which had so high, ancient, and venerable a sanction? A comparison of the two sets of laws makes it pretty clear that the Priestly Code (that is, Leviticus and kindred sections) is an advance on the programme of Ezekiel. *Ezekiel, therefore,* it is concluded, *chronologically precedes that code,* and so his apparent deviations from it are not difficult to account for. Again, if that code, with its ceaseless and elaborate insistence on sacrifice, had been in existence in pre-exilic times, it is highly improbable that Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah would have expressed themselves as they did on the subject of sacrifice.[1]

One of the important arguments by which this conclusion is reached — of the priority of Ezekiel to the Priestly Code[2] — is that, while in Leviticus a sharp distinction is recognized between the priests and the Levites, we see in Ezekiel xliv. 5 ff. the origin of that distinction. The Levites who had ministered at the idolatrous shrines in the various high places throughout the land were to be degraded from the priesthood. In the Book of Deuteronomy, however, with hardly any exception, no such distinction between priests and Levites is drawn. *The chronological order would therefore be Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, the Priestly Code.*

But what is the date of Deuteronomy? There is little doubt that that was the book found in the temple, on which Josiah based his reformation. Now there is much in the book which suggests that, as a whole, it was written not earlier than the time of Manasseh (696–641 B. C.). But the most important feature of the book is its emphatic demand for the centraliza-

[1] The elaborate collection of references in Stanley Leathes' "The Law in the Prophets" is a long way from proving his contention that "the several books of the Pentateuch, substantially as we have them, were well known to all the prophets, and must have been studied by them" (p. ix).

[2] The post-exilic date of this code is also suggested, though not proved, by the fact that there is practically no trace of its operation till the days of Nehemiah and Ezra.

tion of the worship : the local sanctuaries were declared illegal. Now throughout the earlier history no such attitude seems to have been maintained towards these sanctuaries. Not only did the people worship there, but also their leaders, men like Saul, Samuel, and Elijah, who were bound to know ; and there is no hint of reproof or censure, no suspicion that they are doing anything illegal. Even Amos and Hosea do not condemn the sanctuaries as such ; therefore, besides internal reasons, there is this external consideration for placing Deuteronomy after Amos and Hosea, that is, after 735 B. C. *Thus the chronological order would be Amos, Hosea ; Deuteronomy ; Ezekiel ; the Priestly Code.*

Two of the Pentateuchal codes have thus been accounted for. There remains the briefer code known as the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22–xxiii. 33). In comparison with Deuteronomy, the character of this code is rudimentary, but little more can be determined about its date than that it is prior to Deuteronomy. There are then *three strata of legislation in the Pentateuch : the Book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy, the Priestly Code, in this chronological order.*

Setting aside the Book of Deuteronomy, whose legislation is introduced and concluded by history, there are also three strata of historical narrative. The double accounts of the Creation, the Flood, the Covenant with Abraham, etc., differing so strikingly in their phraseology and religious conceptions, suggested the idea that behind, at least, the Book of Genesis there lay two documents. Further examination confirmed this supposition, and proved that the documents ran on at least into the Book of Joshua. One of these documents — that which uses the name of "Elohim" for God — was shown to have unmistakable linguistic and religious affinities with the priestly legislation ; so that it must also have a priestly origin and belong to the later period. When this section, beginning with the Creation, ending with the conquest and division of the land, and centring in the legislation of Moses, was deducted from the historical part of the Hexateuch, what was left was found, on closer examination, to be not quite homogeneous. There were still duplicates left. Two very similar stories would be told, with this difference, among others, that one of them named the Divine Being "Jehovah," and the other "Elohim"

(cf. Gen. xii. and xx.). This observation suggested to two scholars quite independently[1] the idea that there were here two cognate documents, one of which resembled the priestly document in using the word "Elohim," but in nothing else. These two documents are prophetic in spirit: they have each characteristics of their own; but in language, tone, nature, and range of interest they are both utterly unlike the priestly history. But as they bear such a general resemblance to each other, and were subsequently welded into one, the resultant history is sometimes spoken of simply as the prophetic history, and known as JE. Thus there are believed to be *three strata of history in the Hexateuch: two prophetic documents* (*J and E*), written before or about the time of the earliest literary prophets (Amos, Hosea), gathering up the ancient traditions of the people, and using them to illustrate the purpose of God for Israel — that purpose which was rooted in the distant past; *and the priestly document* (*P*), the interest of which centres very largely in the worship.

These histories all deal with Israel's origins; but the purpose which was illustrated by the story of the early days could be illustrated with equal clearness by the subsequent history of the nation; and this appears to have been done by certain writers during the exile. To their sad eyes the lessons of the past were clear; and the abrupt break in the national history afforded an opportunity to recount the long story from the days of Joshua and the Judges to the fall of Jerusalem. There was plenty of material in the form of brief histories, biographies, court annals, etc. This material was all worked over in the spirit of Deuteronomy, and the facts were so set as to illustrate its characteristic teaching, that national faithfulness meant prosperity, and idolatry, ruin — a lesson which had received the most tragic confirmation from the exile itself. *It was this period then* (i. e. *the exile*) *that gave us the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in much their present form.*

After the exile, priestly interests began to predominate. Jerusalem, and especially the temple, became for the Jew the centre of the world. The priestly activities were directed to literature as well as ritual, and the period was marked, as we should expect, by religious poetry and history. Older psalms

[1] Cf. p. 72, note 2.

were adapted and new psalms were composed for use in the public worship of the temple. *To this time* (i. e. *the post-exilic age*) *much, if not most, of the Psalter is relegated by modern criticism.* Further, the whole history of the people, from the very beginning down to the days of Ezra, was written from the priestly standpoint; so that the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, are the outcome of the same spirit as elaborated the priestly legislation, and the priestly history in the Hexateuch. The stern facts of the third and second centuries B. C. created a new species of literature. Their gloom is reflected in Ecclesiastes; their sorrows are echoed in the Maccabean psalms; their concentrated passion and invincible hope glow in the pages of the Apocalypse of Daniel; and within half a century the last word of the Old Testament had almost certainly been spoken.

A very brief tabulation of the more important dates, some of which are necessarily very uncertain, and are only offered provisionally, will show at a glance the main bearings of the critical reconstruction of the literary history.

	B. C.
Traditions, war-ballads, and other songs . .	1200–1000
The prophetic history of the Jehovist document	850
The prophetic history of the Elohist document	750
Amos and Hosea	750–735
Isaiah	740–700
Micah	725–690
Nahum	650
Zephaniah	630
Deuteronomy (written probably in Manasseh's reign), published	621
Jeremiah	626–586
Habakkuk	600
Exile 597 B. C. (first deportation) 586 (second deportation) to	538
Ezekiel	592–570
Lamentations	586
All the historical books up to Kings edited in the spirit of Deuteronomy	600–560
Deutero-Isaiah	540
Haggai and Zechariah	520
Psalter, collected, edited, and largely composed	520–150

	B. C.
Priestly Code (Leviticus, etc.)	500–450
Malachi	460
Ruth	450
Joel, Jonah, Obadiah, Job	450–400
Pentateuch in practically its present form, before	400
Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah	350–250
Song of Songs	350
Proverbs	300
Ecclesiastes	250
Daniel	167
Esther	150

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